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STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HUNGER IN AMERICA

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-NINTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

OVERSIGHT ON STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HUNGER IN AMERICA

MAY 21, 1986

Printed for the use of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
63-242 O WASHINGTON : 1986

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office
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S541-77

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STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HUNGER IN AMERICA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 1986

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met pursuant to notice, at 10:15 a.m., in room SD-430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Orrin Hatch (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Grassley, Kennedy, Metzenbaum, Dodd, and Simon.

Also present: Senators Dole and Boschwitz and Congressman Panetta.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR HATCH

The CHAIRMAN. I want to open this hearing of the Senate Labor Committee with some good news. America is the best fed country in the world; the best fed country in history. We have the most food, and we consume the most calories. Americans spend a lower percentage of their income for food than any nation in history and, in real terms, food prices are now at their lowest level ever.

A recent study in my home State of Utah showed that the real nutrition problem among low-income families is not lack of food; it is obesity. Admittedly that is largely because of poor food selection—but still, that is not unrepresentative of national studies. But then there's the bad news—in the midst of this abundance, there are still hungry people in America. No one's going to deny that because it's simply common sense that there will be hungry people who sometimes have difficulties. But neither should anyone deny that we have gone to extraordinary lengths to take care of the hungry people in this country.

In the Federal Government alone, we have programs like foodstamps, and the Women, Infants, and Children's Program. We have 1.8 million schoolchildren getting free lunches every day. All in all, we spend about $19 billion a year on Federal food programs alone. We can be, and we should be proud of the kindhearted and generous nature of Americans, which has allowed us to make such great progress toward wiping out hunger in our country.

Still, there is a concern out there. The concern that despite all we have done hunger is still a large and looming public health problem. That concern is deepened by news reports about hungry people, by studies undertaken by Washington-based poverty lobbies, and by well-meaning private sector efforts to eradicate hunger.

That concern seems to be corroborated by what we see around us in just about every major city in our country. Street people sleeping in corners, and scrounging in garbage cans. I believe this concern is a good thing; it is another piece of evidence of the caring nature of the American people and their love for their neighbors. That kind of caring, of course, has galvanized community, national, and even international efforts to eradicate hunger, both at home and abroad.

I was deeply moved a year ago to hear the testimony of three 12-year-olds from my own home State of Utah who had raised thousands of dollars from their fellow schoolchildren to combat famine in Africa. The current effort to get 6 million people to stretch their hands across America is another example of this most typical American trait: our goodness and generosity.

I believe that it is important not to let this concern get the better of us by exaggerating the true extent of hunger in America. It is sometimes tempting to portray the cup as half empty when it is actually nearly overflowing.

We will not help hungry people by distorting the true picture of hunger in the United States. To the contrary, we may actually hurt them.

For such distortion may eventually hurt the credibility of efforts to solve the problem. More importantly, exaggerating the problem will hurt us in attempting to give help to those who really do need it. If, for example, hunger is really limited to a small, core group facing unusual circumstances, then large, unguided new programs will only stir resentment and reduce support for programs aimed at those who are truly needy.

If we really care about hungry people, and people are what we are talking about here today, not statistics, we should concentrate on finding out exactly who they are and what exactly we can do for them.

Who are the hungry people in America? How many are there? Where are they? Why have they failed to share in the veritable cornucopia America is blessed with? Why have Federal programs failed to reach them? Given the fact that we are all free to do what we want, including to turn government aid down, what are the limits on Federal action to aid hungry people?

It may be difficult to answer such questions. It is difficult enough to even agree on what it means to be hungry in a nation as rich in food resources as ours. But only when we have made an attempt to answer such questions and to accept the answers even though they may not fit our preconceived notions of the problem, will we be able to formulate strategies to get help to those who need it without wasting limited Federal resources.

The members of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry have been grappling with this question for some time, and we are honored to have two of that committee's most distinguished members, the majority leader and Senator Boschwitz today, along with a very fine series of other witnesses.

I appreciate your willingness to explore with us today the reasons why, despite our riches and our efforts, hunger continues to be a public health problem in America. Considering the agencies under the jurisdiction of this committee, we solicit your input as to what can be done to address the problem.

I am an optimist. I believe that we can end hunger as a public health problem in America. I believe that not only because I have faith in our Government, but because I have faith in the goodness and the kindness and generosity and yes, the love, that I have seen in the hearts of all Americans.

Americans care as I do—care enough to make sure that our efforts really do bear fruit for those who still need our help.

We are very grateful to have our witnesses with us today.

Senator Kennedy, let us turn to you for your opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR KENNEDY

Senator **Kennedy**. Thank you, very much, Mr. Chairman.

I, first of all, want to express my appreciation to you for holding these hearings. A number of us on this side had requested that we hold this hearing at this particular time, when all across our Nation there is a renewed focus on one of the very critical issues that this country is faced with, and that is the problem of hunger.

I would hope, Mr. Chairman, that at the outset of this hearing as we move through the course of this day, that there would be no doubt in the minds of any of us, certainly there is not in the 20 million Americans who are hungry today in our country, that there is clear and convincing and compelling evidence that there is hunger all over this country and it is increasing.

I do not know how many more studies we have to have. We have got them. And I know that there are those within the administration who want further documentation of this issue, but I do not think that any open-minded fair-minded person who will hear our witnesses today, our distinguished majority leader, and Senator Boschwitz, and Leon Panetta, who have been great leaders in the Senate and in the House on this issue. There should not be any question that there is a problem and it is increasing.

And there should not be any question in the minds of any Americans, and that is that we know how to deal with it. We can solve the problem of hunger in America. There are many problems that we cannot, in the Senate, and the House of Representatives, and the executive branch, but we can on hunger. We can. We know how to do it. And the real question is whether we, as a country, have a will to do it.

I think it is a fierce indictment in our society when we fail to meet that responsibility. Of the 20 million, half are children. Half are children in our country that are on the borderlines of malnutrition and serious problems with hunger.

So, I hope that as we have the focus this week on the extraordinary demonstration of the true American spirit with the hands going across this country and the focus that is being placed on this issue, and the hopefully hundreds of millions of dollars that will be raised in that effort, that we recognize that we, here in this Congress, have an important responsibility.

As Congressman Panetta and I are introducing legislation today, the Hunger Relief Act of 1986, that will mean a billion dollars this year in 12 different areas of hunger and related issues. We have got a budget of $850 billion and certainly the issue should not be, Can we afford it? The issue should be, can we afford not to do it?

And I will look forward to hearing from our witnesses this morning and I would like to ask consent that my complete statement be made a part of the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you; without objection, it will be done.

[The prepared statement of Senator Kennedy follows:]

from the office of

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

of Massachusetts

STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY
LABOR COMMITTEE HEARING ON
STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HUNGER IN AMERICA

For Immediate Release
May 21, 1986

Mr. President. I would like to thank the distinguished Chairman for his cooperation in holding this hearing, and, I commend Senator Hatch for his commitment to people who are in need. The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee has a special interest in the condition of life for the over 33 million citizens who are living in poverty. The effects of poverty and hunger are in our schools, hospitals, mental health clinics, child abuse and domestic violence crisis centers, Community Action Agencies, Head Start programs, as well as in soup kitchens and food lines.

Three years ago Congress first began receiving reports that a rapidly increasing number of Americans were going hungry. And 3 years later, we continue to receive these startling and dangerous reports telling us that the demand for emergency food services continues to rise. I personally have stood in a food line on a cold, rainy day and talked with many of the almost 1,000 citizens who weathered the cold and obtained 5 pounds of cheese and 5 pounds of butter. I talked with public health officials in several cities who told me of the increasing health problems that they were observing among low-income people. And, I heard from many emergency food providers who told me about having to turn people away because they were unable to accomodate the dramatic increases in demand for their services.

The governors and mayors of America have told us that there is a crisis of hunger and homelessness across the country and many people who are in need have told us of their suffering and their need for help. Many have no voice. Children are the poorest group in this country. One out of four American children live in poverty.

I believe that the American people will not stand for the continued suffering of their fellow Americans if they are made aware of it. The Harvard School of Public Health reported in 1985 that hunger is sweeping across this nation faster than at any time since the Depression.

At the same time that hunger was returning to America, famine swept Africa. I travelled with my family to Ethiopia and the Sudan and saw the pain of the people and children of Africa. The world reached out to them, and an unprecedented relief effort turned the tide of famine; seven million lives were saved. Of that effort, the world and the people of this country are justly proud.

But there remains a crisis here in America. Millions of Americans and their children are without enough to eat. Many of the same people who worked to save lives in Africa have turned their energies to restore hope for millions at home. The Hands Across America event this Sunday will show the concern and commitment of Americans to the hunger that other Americans suffer. Their hands will reach from Coast through desert, to cities and farms, and from hand to hand a bond will be forged against poverty, hunger and neglect.

Today the Labor and Human Resources Committee will examine strategies to eradicate hunger in America. We want government to join hands with private citizens to end hunger in this country. Private efforts are vital, but they are no substitute for public action. We hope that the Administration will join us in this commitment.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Metzenbaum.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR METZENBAUM

Senator METZENBAUM. Mr. Chairman, I want to commend you in setting up these hearings, and Senator Kennedy for your leadership. And I congratulate you on the list of witnesses testifying, including the majority leader. I think that it is significant and a strong indication that we, here in the Congress, have a sense of shame and embarrassment about the fact that the richest country in the world has so many people in this Nation going without food on a daily basis.

I cannot think of anything that makes me feel more uncomfortable, makes me feel more squeamish, than the fact that the money is there and the food is there; some of the food is in storage and people are not being fed. And truly it is one of those questions that when people ask you, well, why should it be that way, there is no adequate answer. Why should it be that way?

The fact that throughout the entire world there is a billion people on this planet that are constantly hungry. Thirty-five thousand of them daily die from hunger. And yet, we, here in America, throw away so much food, fail to conserve it, fail to keep it fresh, fail to make it edible. I think that the idea of having this hearing on strategies as to how we deal with the problem of hunger in America is probably as meaningful as anything that we will do during this session of Congress.

I think that we not only need to have these strategies, we have to implement the programs. We have to move forward and meet the challenge and if we only talk about it and do nothing more, it will not be enough. But with the kind of people that you have here, today, the fact that this hearing is being held, I feel confident that we will not only talk but that we will act. And, without some action indicating our resolve, it would be really another lost cause.

We cannot afford to have hunger in America, just another lost cause. You have to understand hunger or appreciate hunger. I do not understand it. I do not appreciate it fortunately in my lifetime. But I do have a sense of empathy for those who live with it daily.

Thank you, and I ask that my statement be submitted in the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Metzenbaum.

[The prepared statement of Senator Metzenbaum follows:]

STATEMENT/ ON "STRATEGIES
TO REDUCE HUNGER IN AMERICA"-LABOR &
HUMAN RESOURCES OVERSIGHT
HEARING--5/21/86--
DATE: MAY 21,1986

MR. CHAIRMAN, I AM PLEASED THAT OUR COMMITTEE HAS SCHEDULED THIS OVERSIGHT HEARING ON "STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HUNGER IN AMERICA," AND I WANT TO COMMEND YOU AND THANK OUR WITNESSES FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK TOWARD MEANINGFUL PUBLIC POLICY, HOPEFULLY NOT JUST TO REDUCE, BUT TO ELIMINATE HUNGER IN AMERICA. IT IS A MATTER OF GROWING AND URGENT CONCERN.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT WE HAVE THE RESOURCES, THE TECHNOLOGY, AND PROVEN SOLUTIONS TO ELIMINATE HUNGER FROM THE FACE OF THE PLANET BY THE YEAR 2000. WHAT WE LACK, EXPERTS AGREE, IS THE COMMITMENT TO GET THE JOB DONE.

WHY IS THAT? HOW CAN WE IGNORE THE FACT THAT A BILLION PEOPLE ON THIS PLANET ARE CONSTANTLY HUNGRY? AND THAT 35,000 OF THEM DIE OF STARVATION DAILY. IS IT POSSIBLE THAT WE IGNORE HUNGER BECAUSE IT'S A CHRONIC CONDITION; IT'S THE NORM; IT'S NO LONGER "NEWS", AND BECAUSE IT'S HAPPENING "OUT THERE"?

BUT IT ISN'T ONLY "OUT THERE"; IT'S HAPPENING HERE,--AND IF WE ACCEPT IT AS THE "NORM", MORE SHAME TO US. IN THIS RICH COUNTRY, OUR FARMERS ARE SO PRODUCTIVE THAT THEIR SURPLUS HARVESTS MUST BE STORED IN HUGE WAREHOUSES AT ENORMOUS EXPENSE TO TAXPAYERS. IT IS IRONIC THAT SOME FARMERS ARE AT THE POVERTY LEVEL

BECAUSE OF HUGE AGRICULTURAL SURPLUSES!

A SURVEY OF 36 METROPOLITAN AREAS AROUND THE NATION SHOWED 1.5 MILLION PEOPLE ARE HUNGRY BECAUSE FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND EVEN EMERGENCY EFFORTS BY PRIVATE GROUPS ARE FAILING TO MEET THEIR FOOD NEEDS. THAT'S IN JUST 36 METROPOLITAN AREAS.

IN SOME OF OUR LARGE URBAN LOCATIONS, OVER 16% MORE PEOPLE ARE SHOWING UP AT SOUP KITCHENS AND OTHER NON-GOVERNMENTAL EMERGENCY FEEDING OPERATIONS THIS YEAR THAN LAST YEAR. IN BOSTON, IN HOUSTON, IN NASHVILLE, CASELOADS ROSE 30% IN 1985. ACCORDING TO THE SURVEY BY HUNGER WATCH U.S.A., CUTS IN FOOD STAMP AND OTHER FEDERAL PROGRAMS HAVE PUT "UNBEARABLE PRESSURE" ON PRIVATE PROVIDERS OF FOOD TO THE HUNGRY.

THE REPORT FOUND THAT 1) ONLY 59% OF PEOPLE ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS WERE RECEIVING

THEM; 2) NATIONWIDE THE WOMEN-INFANT-CHILDREN PROGRAM (WIC),WHICH PROVIDES NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS FOR CHILDREN UNDER 5 AND PREGNANT WOMEN, SERVES ONLY A THIRD OF THOSE ELIGIBLE, AND 3) 225,000 POOR CHILDREN ELIGIBLE FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS WERE NOT RECEIVING THEM AT SITES RESPONDING TO THE SURVEY. THE CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND NOTES THAT 13 MILLION CHILDREN IN THIS RICH LAND ARE POOR, AND OVER HALF A MILLION OF THEM ARE EXPERIENCING SEVERE CLINICAL MALNUTRITION.

THE ADMINISTRATION IS UNWILLING TO ACCEPT THE REALITIES. THEY DISPUTE THE EXTENT OF HUNGER IN THE U.S. THEY WON'T EVEN LISTEN TO THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS, BOTH REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRAT, OR TO LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WHO PRESENT EVIDENCE THAT HUNGER IS GROWING DRAMATICALLY, AND WHO OPPOSE THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS TO CUT FEDERAL FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGREAMS.

THAT SO-CALLED "SAFETY NET" THE ADMINISTRATION SUPPOSEDLY SUPPORTS IS A MYTH. WHAT IT'S SUPPORTING IS INCREASING HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS, AND RISING INFANT MORTALITY RATES.

PROPHETS AND POETS AND PHILOSOPHERS HAVE A VISION OF A BETTER WORLD -- A WORLD WHERE NO ONE WILL GO HUNGRY OR HOMELESS. POLITICIANS, TOO, NEED SUCH A VISION. THIS RICH COUNTRY HAS THE RESOURCES. WHAT WE NEED IS THE COMMITMENT. I'M HOPEFUL THAT THIS HEARING WILL ENCOURAGE THAT COMMITMENT.

The **Chairman**. Senator Simon.

Senator **Simon**. I simply want to join in commending you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. I commend our colleagues here for their leadership and particularly welcome Congressman Panetta, with whom I have had the honor to serve in the House.

Hunger is a tremendous problem. It is a problem beyond our borders. The majority of people on the face of the Earth, this minute are going to die before their natural time either for lack of food or for lack of protein in their food, while it is statistically true that some of us in this room are going to die before our natural time, because we have too much good food—the irony that Senator Metzenbaum pointed out.

Your question Mr. Chairman, why, we ought to focus on why, the why gets down to education programs. Right in back of you is a poster that says, half the people suffering from unemployment are not old enough to work. As Senator Kennedy, and I appreciate his leadership in this area, has said, it is unemployment. Why does Japan have one-third the unemployment rate that we do in the United States? Because Japan has made a priority out of putting people to work. We have an increasing percentage of our population falling below the poverty line. That is one of the reasons.

I applaud Hands Across America, and I think it is important much beyond the dollars they raise. Finally, Mr. Chairman, you say, Americans care. I believe that. But Americans need leadership. The problem is not one of resources. The problem is one of will. How do we move in the right direction?

And I hope that from this hearing we can get more of that leadership.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The **Chairman**. Thank you, Senator Simon.

Now, today it is my pleasure to welcome three of our colleagues here, today, who have indicated and dedicated many hours of public service to understanding the issues of hunger in America and throughout the world. I really appreciate, we all do appreciate your time in being with us today. And your willingness to share your views on strategies to reduce hunger in America.

First, I would like to welcome our distinguished majority leader of the U.S. Senate and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Nutrition. And second, I am pleased to welcome to the Senate Congressman Leon Panetta, chairman of the Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing. And third, I welcome Senator Rudy Boschwitz, a very active member of the Senate Agricultural Committee.

We are very grateful to have you here, and again, I apologize to all three of you for the delay.

Senator Dole, we will start with you.

Senator **Metzenbaum**. Mr. Chairman, Senator Dole, I am going to leave because it is Sakarov's 65th birthday and there is a celebration of it and my leaving is not from a lack of interest, it is just that I cannot be two places at the same time.

The **Chairman**. We understand.

Senator Dole.

STATEMENTS OF SENATOR ROBERT J. DOLE, KANSAS, MAJORITY LEADER, U.S SENATE, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION; CONGRESSMAN LEON PANETTA, CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC MARKETING; AND SENATOR RUDY BOSCHWITZ, MINNESOTA, SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION

Senator DOLE. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

I appreciate very much being here. I want to thank both you and Senator Kennedy and certainly, Congressman Panetta, Senator Boschwitz, and the other witnesses who are going to testify today.

I also want to commend those who participating in Hands Across America, it is another indication, we have them almost on an annual basis, that there is a great deal of concern across America for those that need, vulnerable groups whether it be hunger, whether it be the elderly, disabled, or whatever. So I really believe that this hearing can serve a purpose and I would say as the chairman of the Nutrition Subcommittee, that I certainly appreciate the assistance that I have had from Senator Boschwitz, that I may be the practical chairman, but he does all the work. But I do have an interest in this program and have been involved in all of these programs since the 1960's and was a member of the Special Select Senate Committee on Hunger created in the early 1960's to address some of these problems. I happen to believe that for the most part they have been effective and I certainly understand. I have been up and down the Hill, I have been on nearly every side of the issue and nearly every program whether it is foodstamps or WIC or school lunch or any other program that affects, hopefully it affects nutrition.

And I recall, and I have said publicly before, that I viewed with a great deal of suspicion the efforts by Senator McGovern who was chairman of the Select Committee on Nutrition in the Senate. I viewed that with suspicion until I went on some of the field trips and saw some of the problems and listened to some of the concerns and not by those who make it a career to advocate or to show up or to be active in certain areas, but by real people. And so it was an educational experience for many of us in the Congress, Democrats and Republicans and I believe that much of the credit for the progress that we have made today, certainly goes back to that committee, under the chairmanship of Senator McGovern. I might say another Republican who was very active, was Senator Bellmon, former Senator Bellmon from the State of Oklahoma.

And we, I think that sort of kicked it off. So, I think I have not reviewed the legislation being introduced today, and obviously it is a matter of great interest. It is very costly. And again, I think that we have to recognize there is a problem. The question, what is the problem? Do we address the problem with more Federal spending? Are there other areas that we should look at? And is the responsibility solely that of the Federal Government? I do not believe so.

And I do not quarrel with anyone. I do not think that we are at odds that there is a problem. And I share the concerns expressed by all of those Senators who have spoken about the tragedy of seeing a child or anyone for that matter, going without food or an inadequate diet.

But it would seem to me that, and I will just summarize my statement because I have to open the Senate, it seems to me that we started off in the 1960's with a study by the Field Foundation, which I really believe laid the groundwork for a lot of the good things that happened after that. The Federal Government responded with a variety of diverse programs of which the Food Stamp Program provides the basis, with other smaller programs targeted to special needs of exceptionally vulnerable segments of the population.

Today, the Federal Government invests about $20.5 billion in a wide array of nutrition programs, with the Food Stamp Program comprising about $12.6 billion of that amount. And I would also say that President Nixon was responsible for extending the Food Stamp Program nationwide, and federalizing benefit levels throughout this country so that we would have some balance in the level of assistance.

Funding for the Food Stamp Program was about $7 billion in 1979 and it is now, as I said, about $13 billion. In 1979, the total food program expenditure was about $11 billion annually and now we are looking at $20 or $21 billion for 10 separate programs. We have a special supplemental food program for women, infants, and children, and that is referred to as WIC; the school lunch, school breakfast, summer food program, and funding for the combined child nutrition programs now totals about $6.2 billion which is up from about $4.7 billion in 1980.

We also have TEFAP, the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program. It is a commodity distribution program. And it is one that started off as a temporary program and it is still with us and I think that it is a good program and we do have surpluses, and we do have food in effect, rotting in certain warehouses that ought to be dispersed either here or abroad, because it is an asset that has no value to our Government. But it costs a great deal of money to store some of the commodities, particularly dairy commodities, cheese and other things. So it seems to me that that program should be continued and has been continued and again, I would credit obviously Democrats and Republicans but Senator Hatfield has been a key player in that particular program.

So, I guess with all of these programs in place, there is a comprehensive food network out there. You look at the local efforts and the State efforts and the Federal efforts, we have the network. It seems to me that there are some cracks that people fall between the cracks. People can say, well, life is not fair. Well, that may be true, but to some it is more unfair than to others. And I think that is the purpose of this hearing to see if there is some way we can go back and take another look at it.

A recent study prepared by the Urban Institute for the Office of Analysis and Evaluation of the Food and Nutrition Service, stated, the findings of this study support the conclusion that the changes enacted in 1981 and 1982, did not fundamentally change the basic structure of the Food Stamp Program.

As a result the effects of the legislative changes in the number of participants, average benefits, and total program costs were smaller than expected. Because I think that there is a feeling out there that since we did make some reductions in the Food Stamp and other programs in 1981 and 1982, that somehow that may be the cause if there is an increase in the need today.

In the first place, I do not think that is true. In the second place, if it is, we tried to focus on areas of programs that were not directly related to the poor in this country. We looked at administrative costs, and we looked at some of the excess deductions and it was bipartisan. I must say as chairman of that committee that I worked closely with Senator Leahy, who was the ranking Democrat on the committee, and there was never any partisan discussion. In fact, I have not checked the votes, but I would guess the votes in the subcommittee and in the full Agriculture Committee were probably unanimous, or nearly unanimous, so that it was not some big partisan debate on whether we should try to reduce expenditures in these programs.

We were faced and still are faced with very huge deficit and it was the view of those of us on the committee that we could make a contribution.

We did a lot of things to attack fraud, waste, and abuse in these programs and that should be attacked in any program, whether it is the Pentagon, or the Food Stamp Program, whether it is Medicare, whether it is Congress or wherever it may be.

So we did do a lot in that area, and certainly Congressman Panetta and others on the House side, Bill Emerson, were right in there helping us, and generally it was on a bipartisan basis. I do not want to leave any impression that we have had a partisan effort either here for the benefits or for the reductions.

There has been program growth and even despite some of the changes made, and I think the program has steadily expanded during the last 6 years. In 1979, Federal funding was approximately $550 million and monthly participation averaged—I am talking about the WIC Program—about 1.5 million women, infants, and children. Now, we are looking at 3.3 million participants with an investment of about $1.6 billion.

Bob Greenstein, who I believe is the real expert in nearly every one of these programs, stated in a testimony before a subcommittee, that and I quote, he said:

> For some time there was a fair amount of debate between those who argued that cuts in food programs had caused a large upsurge in hunger and those who denied that a hunger problem existed.
>
> I think that the evidence increasingly indicates that both of those positions were mistaken. The problem of hunger is real. But it is caused by many factors. Federal budget cuts in food programs were probably not the cause here.

So the point that I want to make in this committee and that we make in our own committee, and we are prepared to cooperate in any way that we can is that there are a number of causes and certainly, the Federal Government as the principle supplier, the principle provider has a real interest.

But it does seem to me that we have to take a look at all the causes. Unemployment is a cause. We are going to have some relief hopefully in the new tax bill. We are going to take 6.5 million low-income Americans off the tax roles. That ought to help. That ought to provide more money for low-income Americans to provide food for their families. And so there are things happening all the time that have a direct or an indirect impact on what their children may have.

And I would just say, in conclusion, that we have to also take into account that the food prices have gone up and not gone up as much as other areas. We find that in the part of the country that I live in and Senator Grassley and Senator Boschwitz, in effect, a depression in rural America. They are suffering from this cheap food policy and that may be a boon to Federal programs on food stamps and others, but I must say that maybe driving some farmers, themselves, and farm families to the Food Stamp Program and the WIC Program and the other programs that they never even heard about 5 or 6 years ago.

So I suggest that we have got a lot of areas to cover and certainly I fussed at times, because I think that there is a tendency and I do not say it is purposefully, but there is a tendency by the media that I think in a 30-second bite to try to pin the blame of hunger on somebody. And I guess the Federal Government being so large, it is easy to pin the blame on the Federal Government. Saying that we ought to spend more money and if you would spend another billion dollars or $10 billion, there would not be a hunger problem in America.

Now, I do not believe that and I do not believe that anyone else here believes that. I do not believe that it is the Federal Government's sole responsibility and I think that it is largely our responsibility but State and local governments, the private sector, the Lion's Clubs, the Rotary Clubs, all of these people across America who are out there serving the American people, including many Mormans, as the distinguished chairman knows, will give what, 2 years of their life for programs of this kind.

So I do not want to leave the impression that somehow the Federal Government is at fault, and if we just put more money in the pot that it would somehow solve the problem. There may be areas that we need to spend more money. There may be areas that we can save some money in the Food Stamp Program. As I said, it is a $13 billion program.

So, we have had a lot of hearings in our committee, and again, I want to thank Senator Boschwitz, for his concern. But I guess the point is that I have been bashed by the right, by the human events almost every week for supporting Food Stamp Programs and WIC Programs and that is their view. I assume there are others who have a different view. I believe most of us who have worked in this field for 15 years have a fairly balanced view. We know that there is a problem, we know that we have a responsibility, and we know we have limitations. And we also know that we cannot solve it alone.

But I certainly do want to commend the Chairman, Senator Hatch for having this hearing and pledge to you, as I think that Senator Boschwitz will, that we are prepared to work with all Senators on both sides of the aisle and Members of the House to see if we can make it better.

I do not think that we gain anything by saying that it is perfect, it is not. And I do believe that if we reach another 100,000 or 200,000 hungry people in America, then this hearing has certainly been worth the effort.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

We know that you have got to run so that we are going to let you go and then move to Congressman Panetta.

[The prepared statement and a copy of Senator Dole's leadership record follow:]

STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HUNGER

TESTIMONY BEFORE LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MAY 21, 1986

MR. DOLE. MR. CHAIRMAN, SENATOR KENNEDY, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES, I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE HERE TODAY TO TESTIFY ON THE HUNGER SITUATION IN THIS COUNTRY. AS THE CURRENT CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION, I FEEL THAT I HAVE A UNIQUE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THIS PROBLEM, BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN WORKING IN THE AREA SINCE THE 1960'S AND HAVE PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FEDERAL FOOD PROGRAMS. A POINT I MIGHT MAKE AT THE OUTSET IS THAT IT IS MY EXPECTATION THAT THIS COMMITTEE WILL NOT FOCUS ON PROGRAMS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

FOR THE MOST PART, IT IS MY VIEW THAT FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE IN ALLEVIATING DOMESTIC NUTRITION PROBLEMS. NO ONE WHO OBJECTIVELY REVIEWS THE ISSUE BELIEVES WE ARE WITNESSING A RETURN TO THE CONDITIONS EXISTING A DECADE OR TWO AGO. CERTAINLY, THE KIND OF PROBLEMS WE OBSERVE IN THE UNITED STATES DO NOT EVEN APPROACH THE EXTENT OF THE RECENT FAMINE CONDITIONS IN SUBSAHARAN AFRICA.

I FIND IT A MOST INTERESTING PHENOMENON THAT THE HUNGER ACTIVISTS SEEM TO COME ALIVE DURING ELECTION YEARS. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES WITH UNEMPLOYMENT DECREASING AND INFLATION DOWN TO THE LOWEST LEVEL IN RECENT MEMORY, IT IS EXTREMELY IRONIC THAT THIS ISSUE IS SURFACING. WHILE I WOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THERE ARE SOME AREAS OF THE COUNTRY THAT HAVE NOT SHARED IN ECONOMIC RECOVERY, MOST AMERICANS WOULD AGREE THAT THEY ARE BETTER OFF TODAY THAN THEY WERE SIX OR SEVEN YEARS AGO.

FEDERAL FOOD PROGRAM EFFORT

TWO DECADES AGO, I SERVED ON THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION WITH FORMER SENATOR GEORGE MCGOVERN. YOU MAY RECALL THAT DOCUMENTARIES AT THAT TIME REVEALED SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION IN OUR COUNTRY. THE FIELD FOUNDATION SENT A TEAM OF DOCTORS AND PUBLIC HEALTH SPECIALISTS INTO POVERTY AREAS IN THIS COUNTRY, AND THE RESULTS OF THESE EXPLORATORY MISSIONS SHOCKED THE AMERICAN PUBLIC, WHO DEMANDED A RESPONSE FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESPONDED WITH A VARIETY OF DIVERSE PROGRAMS, OF WHICH THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM PROVIDES THE BASIS, WITH OTHER SMALLER PROGRAMS TARGETED TO THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF EXCEPTIONALLY VULNERABLE SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION. TODAY, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INVESTS ABOUT $20.5 BILLION IN A WIDE ARRAY OF NUTRITION PROGRAMS, WITH THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM COMPRISING $12.6 BILLION OF THIS AMOUNT. PRESIDENT NIXON WAS ACTUALLY RESPONSIBLE

FOR EXPANDING THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM NATIONWIDE AND FEDERALIZING BENEFIT LEVELS SO THAT PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THIS COUNTRY WERE ASSURED OF THE SAME LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE. FUNDING FOR THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM WAS ABOUT $7 BILLION IN 1979 -- IT IS NOW BEING FUNDED AT A LEVEL OF ABOUT $13 BILLION. IN 1979, TOTAL FOOD PROGRAM EXPENDITURES WERE ABOUT $11 BILLION, AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS NOW SPENDING OVER $20 BILLION ON MORE THAN TEN SEPARATE PROGRAMS.

WE HAVE THE SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (USUALLY REFERRED TO AS WIC); THE SCHOOL LUNCH, SCHOOL BREAKFAST, AND SUMMER FOOD PROGRAMS. FUNDING FOR THE COMBINED CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS NOW TOTALS ABOUT $5.6 BILLION, UP FROM $4.7 BILLION IN 1980.

THE TEMPORARY EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP) IS A COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM, DESIGNED TO PROVIDE SURPLUS AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES TO LOW-INCOME AND UNEMPLOYED FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS, WHO, FOR SOME REASON MAY NOT BE REACHED BY THE REGULAR NUTRITION PROGRAM STRUCTURE. DURING THE DEPTHS OF THE 1982-83 RECESSION, SENATOR HATFIELD, MYSELF AND OTHERS FOUNDED THIS PROGRAM IN RESPONSE TO AGRICULTURAL SURPLUSES AND THE INCREASED NEED FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE. ALTHOUGH IT WAS INTENDED TO BE A TEMPORARY RELIEF MEASURE, IT HAS CONTINUED TO BE REAUTHORIZED.

WITH ALL OF THESE FEDERAL PROGRAMS IN PLACE, ALONG WITH STATE AND LOCAL EFFORTS, AND THE ASSISTANCE OF PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS AND VOLUNTEERS, THERE IS A VERY COMPREHENSIVE FOOD ASSISTANCE NETWORK IN PLACE. SOMEWHERE ALONG THIS CHAIN, ACCESS TO FOOD IS PROVIDED, AND THERE SHOULD BE NO REASON FOR PEOPLE TO FALL BETWEEN THE CRACKS. HOWEVER, UNFORTUNATELY, THIS DOES STILL HAPPEN.

RECENT TRENDS IN FOOD PROGRAM CHANGES

A RECENT STUDY PREPARED BY THE URBAN INSTITUTE FOR THE OFFICE OF ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION, FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE OF THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, STATED:

> THE FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY SUPPORT THE CONCLUSION THAT THE CHANGES ENACTED IN 1981 AND 1982 DID NOT FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGE THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM. AS A RESULT, THE EFFECTS OF THE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS, AVERAGE BENEFITS, AND TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS WERE SMALLER THAN EXPECTED.
>
> WHILE THE RECESSION AFFECTED THE NUMBER OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS TO SOME DEGREE, THE IMPACT ON CASELOADS AND COSTS WAS FAR LOWER THAN EXPECTED BECAUSE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IS FAR MORE COMPLEX THAN PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT.

BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

WHILE THERE ARE THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BLAME THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION FOR WHAT THEY DESCRIBE AS "HUNGER IN AMERICA", THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT BUDGET CUTS ENACTED IN 1981 AND 1982 WERE PROPOSALS DESIGNED BY THE CONGRESS IN A BIPARTISAN FASHION -- THEY WERE NOT ADMINISTRATION PROPOSALS. AS CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION DURING THIS PERIOD, I WORKED VERY CLOSELY WITH PATRICK LEAHY AND OTHER DEMOCRATS TO ACHIEVE SIGNIFICANT BUDGET SAVINGS WHILE IMPROVING THE TARGETING OF FOOD STAMP AND CHILD NUTRITION BENEFITS, INITIATING ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS, AND ATTACKING FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE IN THESE PROGRAMS.

THE URBAN INSTITUTE ACTUALLY FOUND THAT THE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES, INDEPENDENT OF CHANGING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, REDUCED PROGRAM COSTS IN FISCAL YEAR 1982 BY ABOUT $450 MILLION TO $650 MILLION, A REDUCTION OF ABOUT 4 TO 6 PERCENT. THE SAVINGS WERE SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER THAN ORIGINALLY ANTICIPATED. THE NUMBER OF FOOD STAMP PARTICIPANTS INCREASED BY 45 PERCENT FROM 1978 TO 1984. AVERAGE ANNUAL BENEFITS INCREASED BY 18 PERCENT, WITH FEDERAL SPENDING ON NUTRITION PROGRAMS UP 58 PERCENT.

FURTHER, SOME FINE-TUNING OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM OCCURRED DURING THE REAUTHORIZATION PROCESS LAST YEAR, AND BENEFITS WERE INCREASED BY ABOUT $500 MILLION TO $1 BILLION FOR THE NEXT THREE FISCAL YEARS. THESE CHANGES REFLECTED LEGISLATION INTRODUCED BY

ACTUAL PROGRAM GROWTH

WHILE SOME MAY CLAIM THAT CUTS IN FOOD PROGRAMS ARE THE CAUSE OF MANY HARDSHIPS, THE FACTS SIMPLY TO NOT INDICATE THIS RESULT. LET'S TAKE THE WIC PROGRAM, FOR EXAMPLE. THIS PROGRAM HAS STEADILY EXPANDED DURING THE LAST SIX YEARS. IN 1979, FEDERAL FUNDING WAS APPROXIMATELY $550 MILLION AND MONTHLY PARTICIPATION AVERAGED 1.5 MILLION WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN. FOR THIS FISCAL YEAR, THE PROGRAM IS SERVING 3.3 MILLION PARTICIPANTS WITH A FEDERAL INVESTMENT OF ABOUT $ 1.6 BILLION. THIS IS A FAIRLY SIGNIFICANT INCREASE AT A TIME WHEN OTHER PROGRAMS WERE UNDERGOING BUDGET REDUCTIONS, AND IT REFLECTS THE TREMENDOUS BIPARTISAN POPULARITY OF THE PROGRAM IN THE CONGRESS.

MR. ROBERT GREENSTEIN, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES HAS TESTIFIED BEFORE THE NUTRITION SUBCOMMITTEE, AND STATED:

> FOR SOME TIME, THERE WAS A FAIR AMOUNT OF DEBATE BETWEEN THOSE WHO ARGUED THAT CUTS IN THE FOOD PROGRAMS HAD CAUSED A LARGE UPSURGE IN HUNGER AND THOSE WHO DENIED THAT A HUNGER PROBLEM EXISTED. I THINK THE EVIDENCE INCREASINGLY INDICATES THAT BOTH OF THESE POSITIONS WERE MISTAKEN. THE PROBLEM OF HUNGER IS REAL, BUT IT IS CAUSED BY MANY FACTORS. FEDERAL BUDGET CUTS IN FOOD PROGRAMS PROBABLY WERE NOT THE CAUSE HERE.

ROOT CAUSES OF HUNGER

THE PROBLEM OF HUNGER IS A VERY COMPLEX ONE, WITH ITS ROOT CAUSES BASED IN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM IS A PRETTY GOOD BAROMETER OF THE ECONOMY. WHEN UNEMPLOYMENT RISES, THE COST OF THE PROGRAM INCREASES ABOUT $650 MILLION FOR EVERY PERCENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT. SIMILARLY, WHEN FOOD PRICE INFLATION INCREASES, PROGRAM COSTS GO UP ABOUT $350 MILLION FOR EACH PERCENTAGE POINT. DURING THE PERIOD 1982-1983, WHEN THIS COUNTRY WAS EXPERIENCING A DEEP RECESSION, PARTICIPATION ROSE ACCORDINGLY AND SPENDING INCREASED IN RESPONSE TO THE INCREASED NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO MET THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.

TOO MUCH EXPECTED OF FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

FOOD PRICES HAVE RISEN 20 PERCENT SINCE 1980, WHILE INFLATION IN SHELTER COSTS AND UTILITIES HAS INCREASED 30 PERCENT AND 40 PERCENT, RESPECTIVELY. THE REAL BURDEN IS ON NON-FOOD LIVING PROBLEMS, AND THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM SHOULDN'T BE ASKED TO SHOULDER THE ENTIRE BURDEN OR BECOME AN EXPANDED INCOME SECURITY PROGRAM. NOT ONLY ARE BASIC BENEFIT LEVELS INDEXED FOR FOOD PRICE INFLATION, BUT THE DEDUCTIONS FOR UTILITIES AND SHELTER WITHIN THE PROGRAM ARE EACH INDIVIDUALLY INDEXED. NO WONDER FEDERAL SPENDING IS GETTING OUT OF HAND! FOOD STAMPS IS RAPIDLY BECOMING A CASH TRANSFER PROGRAM -- RATHER THAN A PROGRAM TO COMBAT HUNGER. THIS IS A FOOD PROGRAM, AND SHOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO SOLVE EVERY PROBLEM THAT POOR PEOPLE FACE.

WITH A PARTICIPATION OF ABOUT 20 MILLION, FOOD STAMPS IS A VERY BROAD-BASED PROGRAM. FOR THIS REASON, MANY PEOPLE TRY TO MAKE IT DO THINGS IT WAS NEVER DESIGNED TO ACCOMPLISH. WE SHOULD KEEP ITS ACTUAL GOALS IN MIND. AND, ALONG THESE LINES, THE REAL ROOT CAUSE OF HUNGER IN THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THIS COMMITTEE IS EXAMINING THE PROBLEM IS POVERTY.

EVIDENCE OF HUNGER

DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS, MY SUBCOMMITTEE HAS HELD EXTENSIVE HEARINGS ON THE NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF LOW-INCOME AMERICANS IN AN ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF REPORTED "HUNGER" PROBLEMS AND THE POTENTIAL CAUSES. ALL OF THIS EXPLORATION BY MY SUBCOMMITTEE AND OTHERS UNDER-SCORED THE FACT THAT COMPREHENSIVE, OBJECTIVE, UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION IS SIMPLY NOT AVAILABLE. MOST OF THE SO-CALLED EVIDENCE OF THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN ANECDOTAL IN NATURE. THE REALITY OF THE "HUNGER" PROBLEM HAS BEEN DISTORTED BY THE MEDIA IN RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS BY PROFESSIONAL HUNGER CRITICS WHO SELDOM OFFER CONSTRUCTIVE IDEAS AND EXPECT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO DO EVERYTHING.

FAIR TREATMENT OF THE ISSUE

FURTHER, THE HUNGER ISSUE SHOULD BE TREATED FAIRLY. WHILE THERE ARE SOME DESERVING AMERICANS WHO FAIL TO RECEIVE ADEQUATE FOOD ASSISTANCE, THERE ARE OTHERS WHO RECEIVE BENEFITS WHO SHOULD

NOT. ALTHOUGH THIS IS RARELY THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION BY HUNGER ACTIVISTS OR THE MEDIA, IT SHOULD BE NOTED FOR THE RECORD THAT, IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM ALONE, AN ESTIMATED $ 900 MILLION ANNUALLY IS SQUANDERED THROUGH THE OVERISSUANCE OF BENEFITS, PAYMENTS TO INELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS AND OUTRIGHT FRAUD. THIS $900 MILLION DOLLARS COULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD ASSISTING THOSE NOT NOW BEING REACHED.

HUNGER -- A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

THERE IS A FALSE NOTION, ADVOCATED BY SOME, THAT THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING DISTRIBUTION, SHOULD REST WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY VIEW THAT FEDERAL EFFORTS SHOULD BE COMPLEMENTED BY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, AS WELL AS THE PRIVATE SECTOR. ALL OF THESE ENTITIES WORKING TOGETHER SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THOSE IN NEED. THE WORK OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, LIKE CHURCHES, FOOD BANKS, AND SOUP KITCHENS, AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS IS ESSENTIAL IN THE WAR AGAINST HUNGER, AND PROVIDES INVALUABLE ASSISTANCE, BECAUSE THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES WHO ARE TRULY IN NEED.

WHILE NUTRITION PROGRAMS HAVE HAD A DRAMATIC, POSITIVE IMPACT ON HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION IN THIS COUNTRY, THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY, NO MATTER HOW SENSITIVE, CANNOT POSSIBLY RESPOND TO ALL OF THE PROBLEMS OF PEOPLE IN NEED OF FOOD ASSISTANCE. RESPONSIBILITY

MUST BE SPREAD AND SHARED IF WE ARE TO PROPERLY SERVE THOSE WHO PERMANENTLY OR TEMPORARILY NEED HELP. EACH INDIVIDUAL REQUIRES HELP DUE TO A DIFFERENT SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES, AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS INCAPABLE OF RESPONDING WITH THIS TYPE OF FINE-TUNED PRECISION.

INCREASED SPENDING NOT A SOLUTION

IF WE LOOK AT CURRENT DOLLARS NOT ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION, FEDERAL SPENDING IN THIS AREA HAS GONE FROM ABOUT $14 BILLION IN FISCAL YEAR 1980 TO $20.5 BILLION THIS YEAR. LAST YEAR'S FOOD SECURITY ACT SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED SPENDING FOR THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM BY $500 MILLION TO $ 1 BILLION, DEPENDING ON HOW THE INCREASES ARE CALCULATED.

DOMESTIC FOOD ASSISTANCE PROBLEMS ARE ON THE MINDS OF MANY AMERICANS THESE DAYS AS WE APPROACH "HANDS ACROSS AMERICA DAY" THIS SUNDAY. MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, ESPECIALLY THOSE OF US ON COMMITTEES WITH JURISDICTION OVER FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS, ARE AWARE OF SCATTERED PROBLEMS IN THE FOOD ASSISTANCE AREA -- PROBLEMS OBVIOUSLY ACCENTUATED BY HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN AREAS THAT HAVE NOT SHARED IN THE OVERALL ECONOMIC RECOVERY. ALTHOUGH MORE MONEY IS BEING SPENT ON NUTRITION PROGRAMS THAN EVER BEFORE, SOME DESERVING AMERICANS ARE STILL FALLING BETWEEN THE CRACKS.

MR. JOHN C. WEICHER, F. K. WEYERHAUSER SCHOLAR IN PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH AT THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE, TESTIFIED BEFORE THE NUTRITION SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUNE 14, 1985, WITH REGARD TO THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM AND SAFETY NET, STATING: "THE EFFECTS OF...CHANGE IN DIRECTION ON THE WELFARE OF MOST HOUSEHOLDS HAVE PROBABLY BEEN SMALL. THE CHANGES IN THE INCOME MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS TURN OUT TO BE LESS SIGNIFICANT THAN MUCH OF THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION WOULD SUGGEST. 'THE SAFETY NET HAS PROBABLY BEEN MAINTAINED, PARTICULARLY FOR THE POOREST PEOPLE.'"

SENATOR DOLE'S FOOD PROGRAM LEADERSHIP RECORD

Since the '60's, when he served with former Senator George McGovern on the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition, Bob Dole has provided strong leadership in the nutrition program area. After reports of hunger in America shocked the American public, he was instrumental in developing federal food programs in response to this serious problem.

In what has traditionally been a bipartisan effort, he was responsible for improving and strengthening the Food Stamp Program as it evolved to assure that benefits were adequate and were directed to those in need. Similarly, he played an active role in improving and expanding the child nutrition programs, as well as initiating the WIC Program (Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children), which is perhaps the most cost-effective federal nutrition program.

Senator Dole became Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Nutrition in 1980. During the budget-cutting era of the early Reagan Administration, his leadership protected the Food Stamp and child nutrition programs from insensitive budget reduction proposals that would have impacted on low-income Americans in need. Instead, while $7 billion was achieved in budget reductions during the fiscal period 1982-1985, most of the savings was implemented through improved targetting of recipient benefits to the most needy, state administrative reforms and anti-fraud and abuse measures.

In 1982, during the recession when unemployment rates reached a high, Senator Dole initated the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in response to the serious need that existed in local communities. This program made surplus agricultural commodities available to soup kitchens, food banks, churches and other charitable organizations engaged in providing food assistance to unemployed and low-income Americans.

When deficit reduction became a priority for the federal government during the last three years, Senator Dole was responsible for defending low-income food programs from further budget cuts that would translate to reductions in benefits for recipients.

Senator **Kennedy**. Mr. Chairman, let me, if I could, Senator Dole assuming that our final budget resolution, conference report provides the $46 million needed to accommodate the needed increases in the child nutrition program, will you be willing to bring up that H.R. 7 conference report on the Senate floor? The H.R. 7 conference report is ready for Senate considerations and it is $47 million in there for child nutrition programs. And I understand that Senator Helms has indicated that he would raise a point of order if we were to bring that up as being inconsistent with the budget resolution.

I am just wondering if we get back on the reconciliation, if they increase that—first of all, I am wondering whether you would give consideration to bringing it up in any event, in the conference report?

Senator **Dole**. You say the $47 million is covered in the present budget resolution?

Senator **Kennedy**. No; it is the House budget, but not in the Senate budget, and therefore, they are in conference now, and I am hopeful that out of the conference that whatever comes out will accommodate that and I guess then there would be no case, obviously to be made against it.

I do not know whether given all of the interest on this program of hunger, whether we could persuade the Senate. Even today, as you are looking around for some business, then you might give some consideration to the Child Nutrition Program that is out of conference, there is a conference report and would target in on both the School Breakfast Program, the Special Milk Program for kindergarten aspects for WIC.

It is a very modest program and maybe we can work later on that.

Senator **Dole**. I would be happy to take a look at it. I have just been advised, I did not know that that conference order has not yet been signed by the Senate conferees, so that would not be available.

But certainly, if the House budget resolution contains the one sticking point and that ends up in the conference report, it would seem to me that any points of order would be nonexistent.

Senator **Kennedy**. As I understand it, I guess we are all hearing whispers over our shoulders, that the conference report is being circulated now for Senate signatures at this very moment, while we are here.

So, perhaps we can at least give some——

Senator **Boschwitz**. I do not think that it is being circulated, at this time, Senator.

Senator **Dole**. I think that there is a tourniquet around it somewhere.

The **Chairman**. Thank you, Senator Dole, we appreciate having you here, and we know that you have got to run.

Senator **Dole**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The **Chairman**. Let's turn to Congressman Panetta, and we are really glad to have you here, Leon. We are honored to have you come over to our side, and give us the benefit of your wisdom.

Mr. **Panetta**. Thank you very much, Senator, I appreciate the invitation and also want to thank you for holding these hearings because it is an important time to do it. And this week with the event of Hands Across America, demonstrating, I think that the country, is indeed, compassionate and concerned about the whole issue of hunger. I think that it is appropriate to have these hearings and to try to focus on what steps can be taken.

I think that there are a few preference points. First of all, Senator, I would just like my statement introduced in the record, and I will summarize it.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, we will put it in the record at an appropriate point.

Mr. PANETTA. A few prefacing remarks—first of all, there has been a great deal of progress made with regard to the hunger issue in this country. The programs that have been put together on a myriad of fronts have been extremely important in trying to deal with the problem of hunger, and I might say, extremely successful in trying to provide nutrition to people in need, and we have to recognize those programs, recognize the validity of those programs and the fact that they have, indeed, served a good cause.

Second, there is no question that hunger in America has not been a partisan issue, beginning with Senators McGovern, Bellmon, Kennedy, Dole, and Boschwitz, and on the House side, Leland, Emerson, George Miller, Jim Jeffords, and a number of others. This is not, by any means, a partisan issue and it cannot be, it has to remain a national issue and I appreciate the fact, that I have gotten a tremendous amount of support on this side of the Hill from people like Rudy Boschwitz and Senator Dole as well as Senator Kennedy and others in trying to put together the reforms that have been implemented in the Food Stamp Program.

Let me just address four questions if I might. One is the question about is hunger there? Because I think that there are still some that ask the question, is it real?

Second, why is it there? Third, why should we be concerned about it, and fourth, what should be our strategy to deal with it?

First of all, on the issue of is it there, I do not think that the question any more is, whether or not there is hunger. I think that the real question is what do we do about it? It has been substantiated by a number of hearings, both on the House side, with my subcommittee and on the Senate side, it has been substantiated by the GAO, by the Governors, and by the Mayor's Conference, and it has been substantiated by the President's own Task Force on Hunger last year, or 2 years ago.

So, commission after commission, study after study has made it clear and if anybody has any question, if anybody has any question about the existence of hunger in our society, I ask them to just walk down to the nearest soup kitchen and they are now in most communities.

Just walk down to the nearest soup kitchen and stand in line and look at the eyes of the people who are there. Soup kitchens that once served 50 or 60 transients are now serving 200, 300, 400 people a day. And that is the case in community after community, after community wherever we have gone with our hearings.

We have found that there has been a tremendous increase with regards to that. Increases in problems relating to children are now reappearing, in terms of inadequate nutrition, malnutrition. Food pantries are overwhelmed. Let me just say that if you ever get a chance Senators, I really would urge you to go to Detroit and see an operation called Project Hope. What it does is that it makes use of the excess foods that we provide through the Commodity Distribution Program and they have set up a magnificant food pantry there for senior citizens.

There are 16,000 elderly senior citizens waiting to [illegible] program today, 16,000. And what they are waiting for [illegible] to die off. Because when they die off, they know that [illegible] able to get a slot and get in to the Food Pantry Progra[illegible]

Again, those examples are true wherever we have [illegible] committees, both in urban and in rural America. An[illegible] that the question is no longer is there hunger? I th[illegible] have to acknowledge that there is a problem and tha[illegible] deal with it.

Why is there hunger? As I think that everyone has pointed out, it is a very complex problem. And there are a lot of factors that contribute to it. Obviously part of it, the factor that [illegible] part of it relates to the recession that we went through. Because there were a number of families that were put out of work that never had another job opportunity. They moved and we had some instances where we had hearings in Oklahoma, families that moved from Massachusetts or from Connecticut, during the time of the recession, moving to the South, hoping that they would get jobs there and they hit the South just at the time that the oil price was going down and they found that there were no jobs located in those areas either so that they wound up in a soup kitchen or in a food pantry.

So the recession had some impact and it still is having an impact.

Second, part of it is the whole issue of access. There are a number of people that qualify for these programs that [illegible] not aware that the programs are there. We have some [illegible] million who would qualify for food stamps today that [illegible] ceiving food stamps and as a result there is a campaign [illegible] to bring attention to the program to those people in need.

Part of it is lack of funds for the programs that are already in place. We are seeing for example, in the WIC Program, 7 million women, infants and children who could qualify for the WIC Program no longer or cannot get the benefits of that program because there is just not enough money in the program itself. About 3 million poor children who do not get school lunches, for the same reason.

And about something like 15 million poor children who do not get breakfast because of the same problem. Part of it is related to the trap of poverty, itself. Poverty as we know, has increased with regards to children. One out of every four children now lives below the poverty line and that obviously has an impact in terms of hunger. Part of it is nutrition education. People who get benefits do not know what to spend it on or how to spend it in terms of proper nutrition. And so we need to improve that side of the ledger.

So those are all of the factors and we have had some cuts in these programs. I think that since 1981, we have had about $12 billion cut out of the programs that involve nutrition. So that that too, has had some impact.

And why should we be concerned about the fact that hunger is here? And that is a question that I think also needs to be responded to. We are obviously a compassionate and concerned society but I often think that the problem of hunger is something that appears on the other side of American [illegible] convinced deep down that there is a hunger problem in their [illegible] actual fact.

It is there, and I think that if they know that it is there, they will be concerned.

The other side of it, and I think that this is very important and the reason that we developed these programs and the reason that we are concerned about it at the Federal level is that this is a costly impact on our society. I know that we are concerned about the budget. I have been on the Budget Committee and I am concerned about these issues, but hunger eats away at the very fabric of our society. We know, for example, in the WIC Programs, substantiated time and time again, that for every dollar we spend on the WIC Program we save $3 in health care costs. That is a savings. If we were not spending that dollar in the WIC Program, we would have to pay for it in increased health care costs, for the mothers and for the children.

Children who do not receive an adequate education because they are hungry. We know the impact and the cost of that child, having to get compensatory education. And having to, at some point, be subsidized because that child just did not get an adequate education because of a lack of nutrition.

The elderly people that does not have adequate nutrition winds up in a nursing home or in a hospital. That is costly. So hunger is [illegible]. It is a very expensive sacrifice in this country and this is why it is important that we be concerned about it and try to deal with it.

What do we do about the problem? How should it be attacked? Obviously, there is a role for the private sector and let me tell you that the private sector is doing a tremendous job today. Thank God for churches and charities and thank God for the groups that are involved in this issue across this country. And again, I urge you to look at community after community, whether it is Chicago or Detroit, Cleveland—every city that we have gone through, we have had churches and charitable groups come and testify about the kind of effort that they are putting together and they are doing a tremendous job. But they are the first ones who will tell you that it is not enough.

They will be the first ones to testify that they cannot handle it. And that is why there is a role, a large role at the Federal and State and local level to try and help deal with this.

We have implemented a hunger relief bill in the last few years or at least the elements of it, that were included in the farm bill last year. And thanks to the help of Rudy Boschwitz, and Bob Dole we were able to get those reforms incorporated into the farm bill.

They are important reforms and hopefully they will be implemented by the administration. There are other steps that need to be taken and that is why Senator Kennedy and I introduced the bill that we did today.

What are those areas that need to be addressed? Let me just touch on them briefly. One is just the simple issue of benefits for those who are receiving food stamps. Today, I think the average we [illegible] extent in terms of additional food purchases.

That is [illegible] just the additional benefit. Second, to try to recognize, for example, the deductions that need to be implemented. The President's Commission on Hunger actually recommended some of the changes that we are incorporating here because they, too, were concerned about this issue. So we take on those issues.

And also the outreach issue. We need to put money into outreach so that people are aware of the benefits that can be made available. Second, in child nutrition and WIC, I think that is just simply a funding problem, that is H.R. 7, that the Senator mentioned, it is just simply getting enough funding into those programs to try to meet the need. And last it is nutrition education. I want to strongly recommend to you, Senator, that you look at this issue of nutrition education because that is an extremely important part of it. We do not pay that much attention to it. The success of the WIC Program is that they actually bring women into a session and teach them what good food is all about. They put them in an environment where they actually provide that kind of help. That is important and I would like to see some of that done with food stamp recipients as well as other food programs.

The CHAIRMAN. That really is an important thing because one of the primary health problems suffered by low-income people [illegible] that really are not doing them much good so that you are really covering a very important point, among others.

Mr. PANETTA. So those are some of the steps that we include in this legislation. I want to just conclude by saying, Hands Across America I think is obviously a very good thing and it shows that we are indeed a compassionate society but it is an event that is intended to focus attention on a promise by this country. I think that the only way that we fulfill that promise is by making a commitment here that we intend to do something about this national shame called hunger.

I thank you for these hearings.

[The prepared statement of Congressman Panetta follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE LEON E. PANETTA
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES
MAY 21, 1986

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee to discuss strategies to reduce hunger in America. I think that both the hearing this morning and the most commendable Hands Across America campaign demonstrate that there is no longer any question that hunger exists in America. Millions of Americans, by their participation in Hands Across America, are calling for an end to hunger in this country.

I think that the issue now has become what are we as a compassionate society going to do about it.

Frankly, I think that the Federal government over the past two decades has put into place a structure which with some fine tuning can ensure that there will not be hunger in our society. Our efforts over the past two decades to reduce hunger in America have often been bipartisan. I am privileged to have here beside me on the podium, Bob Dole, who has been instrumental in the development of the Food Stamp Program. The fact that we can rise above partisan politics where hunger is concerned is evident when we remember that the basic structure of both the current Food Stamp program and the Child Nutrition programs was put in place during the Nixon administration when both Houses of the Congress were controlled by the Democrats.

Since we have all these programs, an appropriate question is: "Why is there still hunger in America?" I think that the answer is that we have learned over the past two decades that the causes of poverty (and of hunger because tragically the two issues are intertwined) are highly complex. There is no single program currently on the books or being proposed that in itself could end hunger.

Over the past two decades, we have forged a network of food assistance programs designed to assure that every man, woman, and child in this country have access to a nutritious diet. Yet, today, we are witnessing the widespread reemergence of the problem of hunger.

Clearly hunger is less severe than was the case two decades ago. Nevertheless, hunger in this land of plenty in which our Department of Agriculture is holding 600 million pounds of surplus cheese is a national shame. I consider the Hands Across America campaign a commendable effort which shows that we are a compassionate society that is unwilling to tolerate hunger.

Poverty is inextricably linked to hunger. Both are very complex problems to which there are no simple cures. In 1984, the most recent year for which poverty statistics are available, the poverty rate was higher than any year since 1966, excluding the poverty surge during the 1982-1983 recession.

Even though the problems of hunger and poverty are difficult, we cannot sit back and do nothing. In fact, as a result of short-sighted budgetary policies over the past few years, we face the spectre of significant long-term costs because of malnutrition.

- Doctors around the country are reporting an increase in nutrition related health problems in children, including instances of severe undernutrition usually found in third world countries.
- In 1983, the most recent year for which statistics are available, low-birth weight among Black infants increased.
- Iron-deficiency anemia is one of the most common nutritional problems among low-income children in the United States. The most recent data from the Center for Disease Control demonstrate significant anemia among young children.
- Only 12 percent of low-income households spending at the full food stamp allotment level receive 100 percent of their Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA's), and only 34 percent are obtaining 80 percent of their RDA's.

In part these disturbing findings reflect the fact that the existing nutrition programs do not even reach a majority of those who are currently eligible for benefits, much less those who need nutrition assistance but cannot receive it because of current program eligibility rules.

- Nearly 14 million, or 41 percent of those eligible for Food Stamp benefits do not receive them.
- More than 7 million women and infants eligible for WIC benefits do not receive them because WIC only serves one third of those eligible.

- More than 3 million poor children do not get free school lunches and almost 15 million poor children do not get free school breakfasts because school lunch reaches only 80 percent of poor children and school breakfasts do not even reach 20 percent of poor children.

I recognize that given the differing committee jurisdictions here in the Senate than the House, some of the programs I have cited do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources. Indeed, I must confess that most of the programs which I have been discussing do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition, which I chair in the House.

At the same time I think that we can all agree that the problems of hunger and poverty are so complex that we must seek to revolve them through comprehensive strategies. Obviously, if low-income Americans receive inadequate health care, even if we provide adequate nutrition, there will still be a serious problem. Similarly, concern about nutrition cannot be confined to a single committee.

I hope that we can make rapid progress this year to make the noble and altruistic sentiments which millions of Americans will demonstrate in the Hands Across America campaign a reality by doing whatever is required on the Federal level to address the serious problem of hunger in our country.

America is speaking with Hands Across America. Now it is time for us to act.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Congressman Panetta. I know that you are busy and we are going to let you go and turn to Senator Boschwitz.

Senator KENNEDY. I just joined. I do not know whether the Congressman will have to leave, but I want to express our very great appreciation for all the work that he has done in chairing that committee on this issue. We have all been enormously impressed by your perseverance and by the constructive attitude and work that has been done by that committee and it is a real service to the Congress and I appreciate your taking the time to speak to us on this issue today.

Mr. PANETTA. Thank you, Senator.

Senator DODD. Mr. Chairman, I just want to commend my former colleague and good friend, coming over to the Senate and the work that he has done in this area as well. He has done an excellent, excellent job and I am always delighted to have his input and his involvement. And his passion on an issue like this.

Thank you, Congressman for coming.

Mr. PANETTA. Thank you.

Senator DODD. I will insert my statement now, if possible?

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Senator Dodd follows:]

STATEMENT OF SENATOR CHRISTOPHER J. DODD
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES
HEARING ON "STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HUNGER IN AMERICA"
MAY 21, 1986

MR. DODD: MR. CHAIRMAN, TO SAY I AM DELIGHTED WE ARE HOLDING A HEARING THIS MORNING ON HUNGER IN AMERICA WOULD NOT BE ENTIRELY ACCURATE. IN A NATION AS RICH IN RESOURCES AS THIS ONE IS, HUNGER SHOULD NOT PRESENT THE BARRIER TO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING THAT IT NOW DOES TO MILLIONS OF YOUNGER AND OLDER AMERICANS. BUT GIVEN THE CRISIS THAT PRESENTLY EXISTS, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE LOOK AT THIS PROBLEM AND SEEK SOLUTIONS IMMEDIATELY.

AS FOUNDER AND CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE CHILDREN'S CAUCUS, I CAN ATTEST TO THE GROWING PROBLEM OF HUNGER FACING THE GENERATION THAT WILL LITERALLY DETERMINE OUR FUTURE. ACCORDING TO 1983 CENSUS DATA, ONE OUT OF EVERY FOUR CHILDREN IN THIS COUNTRY UNDER THE AGE OF 6 IS NOW POOR. FOR BLACK AND HISPANIC CHILDREN, THAT FIGURE IS ALMOST DOUBLED. FOR THE THREE MILLION OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE JOINED THE POVERTY ROLLS SINCE 1980, THAT POVERTY HAS ALSO TOO OFTEN MEANT HUNGER. THREE MILLION CHILDREN NATIONWIDE HAVE LOST SCHOOL LUNCHES SINCE 1980 DUE TO BUDGET CUTS. IN MY STATE

OF CONNECTICUT, ONE OUT OF FOUR SCHOOL CHILDREN LOST SCHOOL LUNCHES IN 1982 ALONE. AND EVERY OTHER CHILD IN THE CITIES OF HARTFORD AND NEW HAVEN IN MY STATE NOW LIVES IN POVERTY.

THREE YEARS AGO, THE CITIZEN'S COMMISSION ON HUNGER IN NEW ENGLAND HEADED BY DR. LARRY BROWN VISITED SCHOOLS AND SOUP KITCHENS FROM MY STATE OF CONNECTICUT TO MAINE. THEY FOUND CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS EATING IN SOUP KITCHENS BECAUSE THEIR FOOD STAMP BENEFITS HAD RUN OUT. THEY FOUND CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS WHOSE ONLY NUTRITIOUS MEAL ANY DAY WAS A SCHOOL LUNCH. AND THEY FOUND PREGNANT WOMEN WHO WERE HAVING TROUBLE GETTING ENOUGH FOOD TO ENSURE HEALTHY, PRENATAL DEVELOPMENT.

THE PROBLEMS WHICH THE CITIZEN'S COMMISSION FOUND IN NEW ENGLAND STRETCH ACROSS THE COUNTRY. WE FIND THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TWENTY YEARS, THE INFANT MORTALITY RATE IS LEVELING OFF AS OPPOSED TO DECLINING. PHYSICIANS FROM CONNECTICUT TO CALIFORNIA ARE SEEING MORE AND MORE CHILDREN WITH ANEMIA AND GROWTH FAILURE LINKED TO MALNOURISHMENT. AND LOW-INCOME SENIOR CITIZENS WITH CHRONIC DISEASES ARE BECOMING FRAILER DUE TO INADEQUATE DIET.

WE HAVE SEEN A TREMENDOUS RESPONSE FROM CHURCHES, CHARITIES, AND NONPROFIT GROUPS TO CURB THE GROWING PROBLEM OF HUNGER. IN MY STATE OF CONNECTICUT, FOOD BANKS HAVE SPRUNG UP ACROSS THE STATE. BUT DESPITE THESE VALIANT EFFORTS, HUNGER PERSISTS IN MY STATE AND MANY OTHERS. THE PRIVATE SECTOR CANNOT HANDLE THE GROWING DEMAND FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE ON ITS OWN. REPRESENTATIVES OF THAT SECTOR HAVE MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT THEY NEED HELP FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. AND THOSE OF US IN THIS COMMITTEE SHOULD BE FOCUSING ON WHAT LEADERSHIP ROLE CONGRESS CAN PLAY HERE.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THE ISSUE OF COMBATTING HUNGER AND MALNOURISHMENT IN THIS COUNTRY IS A NATIONAL DEFENSE ISSUE. AND I INTEND TO ACT ON THIS ISSUE AS IF THE FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY DEPENDS UPON IT. BECAUSE IT DOES. I THANK OUR DISTINGUISHED WITNESSES FOR COMING HERE TODAY TO FOCUS ON THIS NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUE.

The **Chairman**. Senator Boschwitz, we will turn to you.

Senator **Boschwitz**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would say to my friend, Senator Kennedy, I am a conferee on the budget and we will try to put, I think it is $46 million, into our budget conference from our side, so that we can take care of that conference report and remove the objection that can indeed, be levied against it. I would say the absence of Senator Dole that because he is the majority leader and has a lot of other obligations that it has fallen upon me to do some of the work on the subcommittee and that I attributed to my staff as well as Senator Dole's staff and I think that we have made some progress.

First, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and Senator Kennedy for the opportunity to testify as most of my experience in hunger and specifically in nutrition has been on the other side of the table as you are this morning, holding the hearings and asking the questions.

The topic of the hearing has of course been repeated a number of times, strategies to reduce hunger in America. Although I understand the emphasis on private sector efforts in discussing the topic of strategies to reduce hunger, we cannot ignore the substantial contribution made by the Federal program. As so often the case, Mr. Chairman, my testimony will be somewhat repetitious when it is the third of three to be given by Members but I would like to rather systematically review some of the programs and so I will follow my testimony rather closely.

While the Federal hunger programs have not relieved all hunger in the country, they have gone a long way toward providing nutritious food for our poorest people. Frankly our Federal nutrition programs have a tough time reaching certain segments of the poor and the hungry and that is particularly so as Congressman Panetta has talked about the fact that soup kitchens have grown and that is a reflection perhaps of some other programs that have been changed in emphasis and where people who are perhaps put in care facilities before now find their ways to the street and they will find their way to the soup kitchens as well. But there really is a difficulty in finding certain segments of the poor and the hungry. We have made some changes that I am going to note as I go along here, in order to go out and find them.

Those people who choose for whatever reason to drop out of society: mental illness, chemical dependency and so forth, will not be reached with programs that require income verification, and other redtape and particularly programs that require that you live somewhere. The Federal nutrition programs including food stamps, school lunch, school breakfasts, child care food, WIC and others have been effective in reducing hunger and malnutrition in the United States. I believe that we have had a reduction in those things. And although the President's Task Force on Food Assistance pointed out that hunger is difficult to quantify and even more so the absence of hunger, simple statistics like the infant mortality rates steadily declining and decreases in the rate of anemia, illustrate that people are eating more nutritionally.

There are other kinds of difficulties. Senator Dole pointed out that we have food rotting in certain food warehouses and I note that in Senator Kennedy and Congressman Panetta's new bill, that they want to ignore displacement, the sales and the distribution of surplus cheese in localities where the unemployment rate is 20 percent higher than the national average. That might be a good provision. I have looked at some of these provisions and I have not had an opportunity to review the bill prior to this time, some of them I would be very supportive of, but it is not always easy to distribute even food that is rotting. And not to have displacement and yes, we can distribute all of that food out the front door and out the back door, we take food in from the surplus that is developed particularly if there is displacement.

And my friend, Congressman Panetta talked about $12 billion in cuts, that have occurred in some of these programs and frankly most of those cuts have occurred because inflation has been less than has been anticipated and the result has been that there has been less need to increase the programs, that the increase has not been as rapid as the high rate of inflation would have envisioned. I am particularly pleased with the improvements in the Food Stamp Program that we made last year in the farm bill. Congress adopted a compromise program that Leon and I suggested and the conferees agreed to add slightly more than $500 million to the Food Stamp Program over current services during the next 5 years.

Two provisions in the food stamp reauthorization illustrate our ability to respond and our desire to respond to changing need. Specifically I would like to point out provisions be included to ease access to the Food Stamp Program for farmers who fall on hard times as Senator Dole talked about and also the homeless. This is something that the Governor of Minnesota and I worked on together.

We included a provision to help the homeless receive food stamps because we found that in 19 States the President's task force actually found that in those 19 States there was a requirement of a fixed household address in order to qualify for food stamps. Well, we included a provision that requires States to provide a means of issuing food stamps to eligible people who do not reside in permanent dwellings and do not have fixed mailing addresses. And certainly that is not an unusual situation for the poor and the homeless, homeless almost by definition.

The major reforms made in the Food Stamp Program include benefit increases targeted to the working poor, and employment and training programs and additional provisions to eliminate fraud. Food stamp eligibility and benefit levels are based on gross income subtracting a number of deductions. To be eligible for food stamps gross income cannot exceed 130 percent of the poverty level, and net income less the deductions I spoke of, cannot exceed 100 percent of poverty. Deductions have included a standard deduction of $95 a month, an excess shelter and dependent care deduction of $139 and 18 percent earned income deduction, and a medical deduction for the elderly and disabled.

I notice that some of those deductions effected in Senator Kennedy's new bill. The benefit increases which went into effect just now on May 1, are targeted to the working poor, and include making the dependent care deduction separate deduction up to a limit of $160 per month, increasing the shelter deduction to $147, increasing the earned income deduction to 20 percent from 18 percent.

In addition, the asset limit of $1,500 was increased to $2,000 and for the elderly to $3,000. The employment and training program will kind of be a miniblock grant to States to institute a work program for food stamp recipients. And under current law, able-bodied recipients between 18 to 60 who do not have dependent children under 6 are required to register for work and participate in job searches. States will be allowed to structure their own employment and training programs and the Federal Government will provide $40 to $75 billion in the graduated increase in the next 5 years to aid the States.

The provisions designed to help eliminate fraud include allowing the Secretary of Agriculture to require photo identification cards where needed and where the cost is effective. And establishing fraud detection units in large metropolitan areas for detection, investigation, and assistance in the prosecution of fraud. And permitting the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out new and modified certification procedures in areas where payment area rates impair the integrity of the program, requiring adult household members to sign under the penalty of perjury and other things. And I have in mind the statement and thoughts of my predecessor, here in the Senate, Senator Humphrey, who used to say that while it is important to eliminate fraud and route out those who take advantage of Government programs, nevertheless for each person who commits fraud in these areas, there is certainly among the wealthy, those who are committing fraud in other areas, who should be routed out as well.

States that charge a sales tax on food stamp purchases will not be eligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program and that will help, because not an insignificant amount of food stamps that was going to pay State sales tax. On balance, I felt that this was a fair compromise that improved the integrity of the Food Stamp Program while protecting or increasing the benefits of those most in need.

We have also been working on legislation to reauthorize and improve the child nutrition programs that Senator Kennedy and other people have talked about. The conference committee has been meeting on and off since January and I think that we have almost unanimous agreement on the bill.

In fact, all the House conferees have signed the agreement that has been mentioned and the legislation would add $46 billion over current services to the child nutrition programs and I think that we are going to be able to work that out, as I said a little earlier on.

We have worked together very well, across the aisle as has been mentioned numerous times and in the process of working together, I think that we have formulated a strong program in the Federal Government to attack the problem of hunger as has been mentioned, none of these Government programs in any of the areas or none of the efforts in the private sector in any area solve problems in their entirety. But the various Government programs, while they may be subject to complaint or criticism and they are always an easy target as Senator Dole pointed out, nevertheless they have achieved a great deal and I think that any fair evaluation would indicate that hunger is on the decline and that it will be the efforts of this committee, Agriculture Committee, and well-intentioned and well-spirited people on both sides of the aisle to continue that trend and indeed, alleviate hunger altogether if we can.

I might say that as I think that Senator Metzenbaum mentioned that most people in the world have hunger problems and that the hunger problems outside of our shores are certainly much more intense. And that it will be the intention of this Senator, I am sure of the others, to work on that as assiduously as domestic hunger. And that much can be done and with the bounty of our farms and the productivity of our agricultural sector, we can do more and we will try to do more.

I want to compliment particularly Senator Kennedy in going and having his people go to Ethiopia. He recently sent me a picture of some of the efforts that my fellow Minnesotans have made there, and we are proud of what they do and proud of what he has done and what other members have done with respect to trying to solve not only domestic but world hunger. That is certainly a problem that will be with us and that we will have to continue to address but on which we are making some progress.

I thank you all.

[The prepared statement of Senator Boschwitz follows:]

STATEMENT BY SENATOR RUDY BOSCHWITZ
HUNGER HEARINGS
BEFORE THE SENATE LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

FIRST, I WANT TO THANK CHAIRMAN HATCH AND SENATOR KENNEDY FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY BEFORE YOUR COMMITTEE ON HUNGER ISSUES. MOST OF MY EXPERIENCE IN HUNGER AND SPECIFICALLY NUTRITION HEARINGS HAS BEEN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TABLE -- ASKING THE QUESTIONS.

THE TOPIC OF THIS HEARING IS "STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HUNGER IN AMERICA." ALTHOUGH I UNDERSTAND THE EMPHASIS IS ON PRIVATE SECTOR EFFORTS, IN DISCUSSING THE TOPIC OF STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HUNGER WE CANNOT IGNORE THE SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION MADE IN REDUCING HUNGER BY THE EXISTING FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS. WHILE THE FEDERAL HUNGER PROGRAMS HAVE NOT RELIEVED ALL HUNGER IN THE COUNTRY, THEY HAVE GONE ALONG WAY TOWARD PROVIDING NUTRITIOUS FOOD FOR OUR POOREST PEOPLE. FRANKLY, OUR FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS HAVE A TOUGH TIME REACHING ACERTAIN SEGMENT OF THE POOR AND HUNGRY. THOSE PEOPLE WHO CHOOSE FOR WHATEVER REASON TO DROP OUT OF SOCIETY (MENTAL ILLNESS, CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY, ETC.) WILL NOT BE REACHED WITH PROGRAMS THAT REQUIRE INCOME VERIFICATION AND OTHER RED TAPE.

THE FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS, INCLUDING FOOD STAMPS, SCHOOL LUNCH, SCHOOL BREAKFAST, CHILD CARE FOOD, WIC, AND OTHERS, HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION IN THE UNITED STATES. ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON FOOD ASSISTANCE POINTED OUT THAT HUNGER IS DIFFICULT TO QUANTIFY, AND EVEN MORE

SO THE ABSENCE OF HUNGER, SIMPLE STATISTICS LIKE THE INFANT MORTALITY RATE STEADILY DECLINING AND DECREASES IN THE RATE OF ANEMIA ILLUSTRATE THAT PEOPLE ARE EATING MORE NUTRITIONALLY.

I AM PARTICULARLY PLEASED WITH THE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM MADE LAST YEAR IN THE FARM BILL. CONGRESS ADOPTED A COMPROMISE PROPOSAL I OFFERED ALONG WITH CONGRESSMAN PANETTA.

THE CONFEREES AGREED TO ADD SLIGHTLY MORE THAN $500 MILLION TO THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM OVER CURRENT SERVICES DURING THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

TWO PROVISIONS IN THE FOOD STAMP REAUTHORIZATION ILLUSTRATE ARE ABILITY TO RESPOND TO CHANGING NEEDS. SPECIFICALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THE PROVISIONS WE INCLUDED TO EASE ACCESS TO THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM FOR FARMERS WHO HAVE FALLEN ON HARD TIMES AND FOR THE HOMELESS.

MANY FARMERS IN MINNESOTA (AND ACROSS THE COUNTRY) ARE FACING SERIOUS FINANCIAL PROBLEMS. IN AN EFFORT TO ADDRESS THESE PROBLEMS A PROVISION WAS INCLUDED WHICH ALLOWS A SELF-EMPLOYED FARMERS TO SUBTRACT THEIR FARMING LOSSES FROM OUTSIDE INCOME IN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR FOOD STAMPS. THE GOVERNOR OF MINNESOTA AND I URGED THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO MAKE THAT CHANGE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE BECAUSE GETTING THAT PROVISION IMPLEMENTED EARLY MEANT NEEDY FARMERS COULD BEGIN RECEIVING FOOD STAMPS.

WE INCLUDED A PROVISION TO HELP THE HOMELESS RECEIVE FOOD STAMPS. THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON FOOD ASSISTANCE FOUND THAT NINETEEN STATES REQUIRED A FIXED HOUSEHOLD ADDRESS IN ORDER FOR AN APPLICANT TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS. WE INCLUDED A

PROVISION THAT REQUIRES STATES TO PROVIDE A MEANS OF ISSUING FOOD STAMPS TO ELIGIBLE PEOPLE WHO DO NOT RESIDE IN PERMANENT DWELLINGS OR DO NOT HAVE FIXED MAILING ADDRESSES.

THE MAJOR REFORMS MADE IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM INCLUDE: BENEFIT INCREASES TARGETED TO THE WORKING POOR, AN EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM; AND ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS TO ELIMINATE FRAUD.

BENEFIT INCREASES TARGETED AT WORKING POOR - FOOD STAMP ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFIT LEVELS ARE BASED ON GROSS INCOME SUBTRACTING A NUMBER OF DEDUCTIONS. TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS YOUR GROSS INCOME CANNOT EXCEED 130 PERCENT OF THE POVERTY LEVEL AND YOUR NET INCOME (LESS THE DEDUCTIONS) CANNOT EXCEED 100 PERCENT OF POVERTY. THE DEDUCTIONS HAVE INCLUDED A STANDARD DEDUCTION ($95 PER MONTH), AN EXCESS SHELTER AND DEPENDENT CARE DEDUCTION ($139 PER MONTH), AN 18 PERCENT OF EARNED INCOME DEDUCTION, AND A MEDICAL DEDUCTION FOR THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED.

THE BENEFIT INCREASES WHICH WENT INTO EFFECT ON MAY 1 ARE TARGETED TO THE WORKING POOR AND INCLUDE: MAKING THE DEPENDENT CARE DEDUCTION A SEPARATE DEDUCTION UP TO A LIMIT OF $160 PER MONTH, INCREASING THE SHELTER DEDUCTION TO $147, AND INCREASING THE EARNED INCOME DEDUCTION TO 20 PERCENT. IN ADDITION, THE ASSET LIMIT OF $1,500 WAS INCREASED TO $2,000. THE ASSET LIMIT FOR THE ELDERLY OF $3,000 WAS EXTENDED TO SINGLE ELDERLY.

THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM WILL BE A "MINI-BLOCK GRANT" TO THE STATES TO INSTITUTE A WORK PROGRAM FOR FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS. UNDER CURRENT LAW, ABLE-BODIED RECIPIENTS BETWEEN 18 AND 60 WHO DO NOT HAVE DEPENDENT CHILDREN UNDER SIX ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER FOR WORK AND PARTICIPATE IN JOB SEARCHES. STATES

WILL NOW BE ALLOWED TO STRUCTURE THEIR OWN EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL PROVIDE $40 - $50 - $60 - $75 - $75 MILLION IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS TO AID THE STATES, PLUS A MATCH IF THE STATE SPENDS MORE ON ITS WORK PROGRAM.

ELIMINATION OF FRAUD - THE PROVISIONS DESIGNED TO HELP ELIMINATE FRAUD INCLUDE: ALLOWING THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE TO REQUIRE PHOTO IDENTIFICATION CARDS WHERE NEEDED AND WHERE COST EFFECTIVE TO PROTECT PROGRAM INTEGRITY; ESTABLISHING FRAUD DETECTION UNITS IN LARGE METROPOLITAN AREAS FOR DETECTION, INVESTIGATION, AND ASSISTANCE IN PROSECUTION OF FRAUD; PERMITTING THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE TO CARRY OUT NEW OR MODIFIED CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES IN AREAS WHERE PAYMENT ERROR RATES IMPAIR THE INTEGRITY OF THE PROGRAM; REQUIRING ADULT HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS TO SIGN UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY THAT EVERYTHING IN A FOOD STAMP APPLICATION OR REPORT IS TRUE; AND, HOLDING EACH ADULT MEMBER OF A FOOD STAMP HOUSEHOLD TO BE JOINTLY AND SEVERALLY LIABLE FOR THE VALUE OF ANY OVERISSUANCE OF FOOD STAMPS.

SALES TAX ON FOOD STAMP PURCHASES - STATES THAT CHARGE A SALES TAX ON FOOD STAMP PURCHASES WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM IF THEY CONTINUE THE PRACTICE AFTER OCTOBER 1, 1987. THIS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASES THE PURCHASING POWER OF FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS IN THOSE STATES THAT HAVE A SALES TAX ON FOOD.

ON BALANCE I FELT THIS WAS A FAIR COMPROMISE THAT IMPROVES THE INTEGRITY OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM WHILE PROTECTING (AND IN SOME CASES INCREASING) THE BENEFITS OF THOSE MOST IN NEED.

WE HAVE ALSO BEEN WORKING ON LEGISLATION TO REAUTHORIZE AND IMPROVE THE CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS. THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE HAS BEEN MEETING SINCE JANUARY AND I THINK WE HAVE ALMOST UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT ON BILL. IN FACT, ALL THE HOUSE CONFEREES HAVE SIGNED THE AGREEMENT. THIS LEGISLATION WOULD ADD $44 MILLION OVER CURRENT SERVICES TO THE CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS NEXT YEAR, INCLUDING: $10 MILLION FOR WIC, RAISING THE TUITION LIMIT FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLS FROM $1500 TO $2000 WHICH COSTS $2 MILLION, AN ADDITIONAL 3 CENTS CASH REIMBURSEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST WHICH COSTS $22 MILLION, AND ALLOWING CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SPECIAL MILK PROGRAM WHICH COSTS $10 MILLION. THESE CHANGES ARE CAREFULLY TARGETED TOWARDS NEEDY CHILDREN AND THOSE SLIPPING THROUGH THE CRACKS OF EXISTING PROGRAMS. I WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TO SEE THIS LEGISLATION ENACTED. I AUTHORED AN AMENDMENT TWO YEARS AGO TO ADD $139 MILLION TO THE CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS, AND I THINK IT IS HIGH TIME WE AT LEAST ACHIEVE THIS MODEST COMPROMISE.

I HAD INTENDED TO FOCUS SOME ON PRIVATE SECTOR EFFORTS TO REDUCE HUNGER, BUT THERE ARE OTHERS MORE WELL QUALIFIED THAN I AM TO ADDRESS THAT TOPIC WHO WILL FOLLOW ME. I DO STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR EFFORTS ARE AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT IN SOLVING THE HUNGER PROBLEM. I DO NOT BELIEVE THERE IS A SINGLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF HUNGER. ALL THE PIECES NEED TO BE FIT TOGETHER (FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS, STATE PROGRAMS, PRIVATE SECTOR EFFORTS) TO CREATE A PICTURE OF A HEALTHY WELL-FED AMERICA.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Boschwitz.

I think that Senator Dole paid a high tribute to your efforts and what you have done. To that I would like to add my tribute as well. I really appreciate the leadership that you have shown in this body, and elsewhere.

Senator KENNEDY. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Senator Boschwitz for his kind remarks. I think that we are focusing on this issue and we are mindful of the efforts that you made in the Child Nutrition Program in 1984, which was the Senator Boschwitz amendment on the Child Nutrition Program to provide funding. We all understand that funding is not the only answer but that is why I appreciated particularly your response to the conference report on the Child Nutrition Program, H.R. 7, and see if we cannot move that forward.

And I think that certainly your efforts in trying to assure us that out of that conference will come the figures so that we can move on, that will be extremely important.

I just would like, at some time, at the chairman's convenience, if we would have the opportunity, Congressman Panetta and I, to maybe make a presentation to your committee on our Hunger Relief Act of 1986. And go over those particular provisions with your committee. We would welcome the opportunity to both do it at a hearing, but more importantly, to work with you on those programs. You are familiar with it and I know that you would have a lot of constructive suggestions. But we certainly would appreciate it.

Senator BOSCHWITZ. You are introducing that today, are you not?

Senator KENNEDY. That is right.

Senator BOSCHWITZ. Fine. It will be referred to committee and I will speak to the chairman about holding hearings at an early date.

Senator KENNEDY. I want to thank you very, very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Boschwitz, we appreciate having you here.

Our next panel of witnesses are representatives of citizens throughout our country who have worked hard to end hunger in America. Famine, in my opinion knows no politics, and our response to it has and should continue to transcend political beliefs and ideologies.

The next panel of witnesses attests to the private and public partnerships that have been created throughout our Nation to stop hunger in America. First it is my pleasure to welcome Cicely Tyson to testify before this committee. She is, of course, one of America's premier actresses and an excellent human being in her own right. In addition Ms. Tyson is a representative for Hands Across America. Ms. Tyson will discuss the efforts underway to link hands in reducing famine throughout our Nation.

Accompanying Ms. Tyson is Donna Brazile, the DC Director for Hands Across America. Donna, we appreciate these beautiful pins that you have given to Senator Kennedy and me.

Our second witness is Dr. Veronica Maz, director of Martha's Table, a soup kitchen in Washington, DC.

George Will described Dr. Maz and her program as a Washington miracle, an organization that is gloriously inexplicable. Dr. Maz, we would appreciate it if you could come to the table?

Our third witness is Ms. Sherry Mize, herself a victim of hunger who has joined us from Minneapolis, MN. Our fourth witness is Ms. Marie Kay Whiteing, who will discuss her efforts with Middle American Network in Mapleton, IA.

We will begin with you, Ms. Tyson. We are happy to have you here and we will enjoy taking your testimony at this time.

STATEMENT OF CICELY TYSON, MALIBU, CA, ACCOMPANIED BY DONNA BRAZILE, DC DIRECTOR, WASHINGTON, DC, HANDS ACROSS AMERICA; DR. VERONICA MAZ, WASHINGTON, DC, MARTHA'S TABLE; SHERRY MIZE, MINNEAPOLIS, MN; AND MARIE K. WHITEING, MAPLETON, IA, MIDDLE AMERICA NETWORK

Ms. Tyson. I must say that I am not very proud of being here this morning. I am embarrassed, and somewhat ashamed, that it is necessary at all to make a plea for the hungry in America. I am embarrassed that there has to be such a day as Hands Across America, to bring about an awareness of the millions of hungry in America.

I have had an opportunity through my chairpersonship of UNICEF to travel throughout the African nations that are ravished by the drought. And was able to witness what the result of that has done to a nation of people not to mention the infants, some of whom are probably dead by now. It is inconceivable to believe that this country, as we all know, wealthy as it is, has millions of hungry people. I am almost a victim of hungry America. I grew up in what is now known as El Barrio and were it not for an extremely resourceful mother I, myself, might not be able to utter these words. We tend, as a nation, to waste an awful lot. I have to point up an incident that brought my realization of the waste in this country to the fore.

The early years of my career, I was invited to a party given in a government house, very well attended by politicians and celebrities and the like and food was everywhere. At one point, I stood in the middle of the lawn and I looked about and I saw food strewn all over the lawn, all over the porch, all over the chairs, all over the table and people were walking in it, kicking it aside. And I got sick to my stomach because I thought, 10 blocks away from here is where I grew up. And people do not have what to feed their children tonight and look at the waste.

Needless to say, I left. Hands Across America, Hearts Across America. For hands without hearts are like bones without flesh. Even so, touching, caring, that is still not enough. Inside the touching and caring, a subtle decoy can fester, a crossfire that can stunt, or worse, can destroy everything good we are setting out to do.

Decoy is accusation. We must stop pointing fingers and start using them. Because hunger and homelessness are not political issues, they are human ones. One that affects every single one of us—politicians notwithstanding.

It has been said that half of our Nation is four paychecks away from being homeless. Those that are homeless, approximately 2 to 3 million and the millions of others that go hungry, they do not need to be caught in the crossfire of accusation.

They need help. If an earthquake leveled the homes of millions of people in this country, if a meltdown created rampant hunger, this Nation with its great love and humanity would open their arms in a way that is wider than the world has ever known.

Well, to me, this is an earthquake. Republicans or Democrats, does it matter who is wrong, when we all know what is right?

Does it?

I doubt it very seriously. Let's trash all of the excuses. Let's do something about the future of the children that are being starved in America.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Tyson.

Let's turn to you, Dr. Maz, and take your testimony at this time.

Dr. MAZ. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to speak for the hungry and about the hungry. For the past 15 years I have been working directly with hungry people founding different organizations and at present, I am president of Martha's Table in Washington, DC. And at Martha's Table we asked five questions about hunger and I think that we have some of the answers.

The first question that we asked was, how do you provide food to the homeless, and to the street people? And our answer was, McKenna's Wagon, a mobile soup kitchen and you could have as many as you want coming from the same soup kitchen, you could reach any poverty corner in your community and every day, our wagons go out to designated spots taking soup, sandwiches, beverages, and we reach 500 people a night.

The second question we asked was, what about the hungry children? And our answer was a storefront soup kitchen, right where the children live and children come every single day—between 3 and 5 for a snack and for breakfast.

Our third question—probably the most important one of all—is how do you end hunger? We do not like to see the lines at McKenna's Wagon, we do not like to see the hungry people but this is a long range program and it has to be a preventive program and what we have at Martha's Table is a junior business kids program. You have to teach the children work habits, discipline, how to make a buck. And really take away social minded people because you have too many social minded people at soup kitchens and working with the poor and you have to change the people with an economic mind, with a business mind.

And in fact, when children come to our soup kitchen, we charge them. They pay 2 cents or they bring an aluminum can. They have to learn when they are young that life is not a handout. You have to start making it on your own.

And the fourth question we asked was, what is a better use of food stamps for the homeless?

Homeless people are eligible for food stamps but they cannot use them because they do not have any place to cook and they do not have any place to store food, so that before the Select House Committee on Hunger, I proposed a food stamp restaurant where you could make better use of food stamps, where homeless people could come to a restaurant and convert to food stamps for a good nutritious meal.

And then our fifth question was, since all of this is working, how do you disseminate this information? And so, we started the National Institute for Neighborhood Self-Help and each year we have a national conference, and we also travel all over the country and teach people how to do this because it does not take any money. It is just different types of skills. And this fall, we will have our conference again in October, our national conference. But to get all of these programs working has to be a cooperation—private sector, public sector. What we do in the private sector is almost all the things that were mentioned before, but I would add just a few things.

We started a sandwich brigade. We go to different schools every single day and children bring one extra sandwich so that from each school you can get 1,000 sandwiches and we do the same thing at business organizations and we arm McKenna's Wagon or the wagon goes to church every single Sunday and as people enter the church they bring some food and they load up the whole wagon. In fact, our wagon comes here, on Capitol Hill, every Thursday, on the Senate side, on the House side, and the staffers bring food. And what I am, I am the official scrounger because food in America is plenty but someone has to get it and figure out a system of dissemination and that is what we have done successfully.

From the public sector, we depend a great deal on USDA food, but in addition, FEMA gave us money for a walk-in refrigerator, a walk-in freezer. If we did not have that we could not operate as extensively as we do.

And in addition, we have a network of volunteers who operate the total program, almost 250 every single week, making the sandwiches, making pickups, riding our wagon, but also we have an educational program for volunteers, but for children and children come by the busloads and they have to learn how to share, and about other children.

But with all of this, we are not a soup kitchen, and we are not actually a food distributor. What we are is really a link in the social and economic system and so I would like to officially invite all of you to come and visit Martha's Table. Dr. Fiefiel did and rode our wagon. Ride our wagon, meet some of the Americans and really see some of the realities but also the positive results. You can see the changes. People have been coming to our wagon and are now working and running our program. And you can see children if you keep coming, you can see the change in their attitudes and even some rosy cheeks, once they start drinking milk, all of them. So I welcome all of you to come and visit us and thank you for inviting me.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Maz follows:]

Testimony

of

Dr. Veronica Maz

on

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HUNGER IN AMERICA

before

THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

UNITED STATES SENATE

May 21, 1986

TESTIMONY OF DR. VERONICA MAZ

Mr. Chairman, thank you for inviting me here today. I appreciate this opportunity to testify before your Committee on the problem of hunger in the nation.

For the past fifteen years, I have worked directly with America's hungry, primarily in organizations that I have founded in the Nation's Capital, such as S.O.M.E. (So Others Might Eat), the House of Ruth, and Martha's Table. At present I am the President of Martha's Table, an organization that operates a soup kitchen for children, a mobile food service called McKenna's Wagon, and a business training program for children, and sponsors the National Institute for Neighborhood Self-Help, which seeks long-term solutions to the problems of hunger and homelessness.

Over the past five years Martha's Table has coordinated volunteers, privately-donated food, USDA surplus commodities, and a transportation system in order to provide adequate and nourishing food to the homeless and children, seven days a week, every day of the year.

This experience has taught me several things about hunger in America. First, many Americans go hungry every day -- in a nation of plenty; Second, the reasons why these people are hungry are as varied as the people themselves; Third, the problem of hunger in America is not one of lack of food; Fourth, in the short run, hunger is a problem of inadequate means to distribute available private and public resources; and Fifth, in the long run, hunger can be prevented on the individual basis only if we are able to reach young people and provide them with the skills and techniques necessary to break out of the poverty cycle. In short, soup kitchens and sandwich wagons make a significant contribution, but they cannot solve the basic problem of hunger in America.

To support these observations I would like to tell you about Martha's Table, about the programs and people there. The diversity found at Martha's Table illustrates just how complex the problem of hunger is and the need for equally complex private and public responses if we are to make significant progress in overcoming this problem.

What is Martha's Table? It is many things and can be looked at from a number of perspectives: Legal, programmatic, economic, social and educational. Let me briefly describe it from each of these perspectives.

Legally, Martha's Table is a non-profit charitable organization incorporated in the District of Columbia in 1981 to provide food for the hungry and housing for the homeless, and to seek solutions to hunger and homelessness.

Programmatically, Martha's Table is comprised of four programs: The Kids Kitchen, McKenna's Wagon, the Junior Business Kids, and the National Institute for Neighborhood Self-Help. Each addresses an aspect of the problem of hunger; each has proved effective.

-- The Kids Kitchen opened in 1981. It serves breakfast and nutritious afternoon snacks seven days a week to hungry area children up to the age of 12. To date, well over 10,000 meals have been served. In order to teach children that in life one must work to earn and pay for what one gets, we require a token "payment" of two cents or an aluminum can for services at the Kids Kitchen.

-- McKenna's Wagon is a converted Good Humor truck which operates as a mobile soup kitchen. Soup, sandwiches, a beverage and dessert are distributed to the homeless street people seven days a week, at six scheduled stops in the District of Columbia. Every day the wagon reaches approximately 500 men, women and children -- and for some of them, this is their only meal of the day. Each year approximately a half-million sandwiches are served. The advantage of a mobile soup kitchen is that food can be prepared at a central kitchen and taken to any pocket of hunger.

-- The third program, created in conjunction with the Kids Kitchen, is the Junior Business Kids Program. We believe that this program has the greatest potential for addressing the problem of hunger in the long run because it is aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty, hunger, and homelessness. Through this program children are taught discipline, work habits, and business techniques. They operate small businesses, such as lemonade stands. Teaching children how to depend on themselves and not on others, teaching them that they have the ability to earn money and to succeed in the work place -- these steps should help break the revolving door of the welfare system.

-- The fourth program is the National Institute for Neighborhood Self-Help. Started in 1982, the Institute offers, nationwide, intensive one-day workshops on how to start soup kitchens, shelters, or other programs to alleviate hunger and poverty without money or major funding. In addition, the Institute is exploring second stage housing for the homeless, and acting as an advocacy group for the homeless. The last conference was held in October, 1985, on Capitol Hill.

-- Just as each of the above programs was our response to a specific question or need, we are planning for future programs to meet needs we now see but are not yet sure how to handle. For example, how can we make better use of food stamps for the homeless, and how can we share our knowledge of effective responses to hunger and homelessness with the nation?

In response to the first question, we have developed a proposal for a "Food Stamp Restaurant". Recently I testified before the House Select Committee on Hunger and explained this concept. The "Food Stamp Restaurant" proposal would allow homeless food stamp recipients to purchase hot meals with their food stamps from specifically-designated non-profit food stamp restaurants. To ensure that these restaurants are run in a manner consistent with the overall non-profit philosophy of the food stamp program, certain restrictions would be imposed. First, only non-profit organizations could apply to participate as a food stamp restaurant -- this would exclude all commercial restaurants. Second, the food stamps would be used by the homeless to purchase a hot and nutritious meal, but these food stamps could only be redeemed by the program operator for food products through food wholesalers or at a supermarket. No cash transactions would be made. The stamps would be used to purchase vegetables, fruits, meats, and fish. Other commodities would be donated by the community. Third, the cost of a meal would be nominal, approximately $ 1.00 in food stamps. Fourth, no USDA food would be used or sold. All costs of preparation, program administration, and other services would be absorbed by the non-profit contractor through contributions and volunteer assistance. In keeping with the policy of the Food Stamp Act, food stamps would be used only for the purchase of bulk foods.

Great interest in this proposed use of the food stamp program exists throughout the nation. Your colleagues on the House side have been very supportive. It appears that we have caught the attention of the Department of Agriculture.

In response to the second question --how to disseminate our accumulated knowledge and techniques that could assist the hungry. We could use your support to make our information available to interested community groups throughout the nation.

Let me move from specific programs to the underlying economy. Here we can clearly see the link between the private and public sectors. From an economic perspective, underlying all of the programs of Martha's Table is the belief that plenty of food is available -- what we need are the mechanisms and systems to distribute them. Or, stated a bit differently, we need the means to link the supply with the demand for food.

We have found food to be plentiful. From the private sector we receive food from churches, schools, and a variety of organizations. Caterers, such as Ridgewell's, will deliver left-overs from Capitol Hill and embassy parties. We have started a sandwich brigade whereby school children at selected schools bring an extra sandwich to school on a designated day. The same thing happens at churches and with various other groups. The wagon picks up donations, or people bring them in. The wagon also goes to church on Sunday. Little Flower Catholic Church is one of our regular donors on a quarterly basis -- parishioners load the wagon, each bringing a particular food item as they enter the church on the designated Sunday.

Senior citizen groups and occasionally office groups also provide food. We ask and remind everyone, including restaurateurs, hotel managers, airlines -- even army posts -- to bring us the left-overs from their luncheons, dinners, or other celebrations.

We also receive assistance from the public sector. From the USDA's food commodities program we regularly obtain cheese, peanut butter, and pork for our sandwiches, as well as vegetables and other food items for our soups. The FEMA program provided us with funds for the purchase of a walk-in refrigerator and a walk-in freezer. Without these we could not have expanded our services to meet the demand. Facilities to store food are essential to any food distribution effort. Also, the Capital Area Food Bank assists us. They supply us with a variety of food and other commodities at 10¢ per pound.

In short, Martha's Table has created a distribution network which combines private left overs and government distributed foods and disseminates them to those in need. By mobilizing the available private and public food resources in the community, we have been able to make a dent in the poverty cycle. From a social perspective, Martha's Table is a microcosm of America at work. On any day you will find a homeless unemployed person rubbing shoulders with a successful business person, or even someone from Capitol Hill volunteering at Martha's Table. Each week we utilize approximately 250 volunteers --- men, women, and children.

Daily there is a volunteer network ---someone making soup, others making pick ups still others conducting the childrens' programs or making sandwiches, and others riding the wagon and distributing food. Last week, for example, Dr. Marvin Fifield, from Senator Hatch's Office and his wife rode the wagon and distributed the food to the street people. I would like to invite all of you to do the same. The sandwiches that day were prepared by a group of youngsters from Sidwell Friends School who arrived by bus, a women's church group, and several community service workers, who were working their probation hours by helping the hungry.

To eradicate hunger from our midst involves education. I have already mentioned the Jr. Business Kids program which is directed toward children vulnerable to future hunger and homelessness. But we also must educate those who have the wherewithal to give.

Not only do the inner city children need education but others should learn to help others while still young. Children come to Martha's Table from surrounding areas by the bus loads to volunteer their services. We have seen that children are ready to help others when they are informed about the need and offered the opportunity to do so. Education is the key to prevention ---the prevention of hunger in our nation.

At Martha's Table we have developed patterns of cooperation and have found many generous and cooperative Americans who will help if only they are given an opportunity. The same vein of cooperation and concern for the hungry exists with individuals whether they are the homeless or whether they are the decision makers on Capitol Hill. People have to be made aware of the need and the opportunity to help. Last Thanksgiving, for example, almost every office on Capitol Hill donated a turkey for our huge dinner for the homeless. The wagon makes a regular stop for donations every Thursday morning on the Senate and House sides where staffers regularly bring food donations to help the hungry.

In sum, Martha's Table provides an example of what can be done when private and public resources are combined effectively. Because of our track record of successes, I believe, we can provide a model --of any specific program-- and of an overall approach to the problem of hunger.

Before concluding, however, I wish to underscore two points. First, Martha's Table is not just a soup kitchen or a sandwich wagon. We are a link in the food distribution chain; and as such were are a link in the economic system.

We have also mobilized a network of volunteers --thereby joining together the haves and have nots --and, as such we are a link in the social system. Finally, as we are involved in education --both the have and have nots-- we are again a link in the social system. In short, what Martha's Table is doing in the Nation's Capital is providing mechanisms to mend the breakdown in our economic and social structures.

Second, we can, therefore, not do this task alone. We need to mobilize the private sector across the country. But we also need support from Federal, State and local governments to provide food commodities, financial resources, and a nationwide education effort to increase public awareness of hunger in our nation.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to address you. In conclusion, I would like to invite you to visit Martha's Table to participate by riding the wagon and distributing food and to meet your fellow Americans.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Doctor.

I have heard a lot of witnesses testify before this committee and we deal with a lot of human problems, all over the world, and especially in this country. However, I do not know when I have ever heard a witness who has not only testified so poingantly, but who has given so many good suggestions to this committee.

I know what you have done, it is nothing short of a real miracle. In fact, I would like to put in the record at this point, the article by George Will about you and Martha's Table.

This article entitled, "Washington's Little Miracles" dated December 5, 1983, covers what you have been doing for the past 15 years. I think that people in this community and throughout this country need to know somebody like you. They need to know somebody who really has it within her means to do whatever she wants to, but has chosen to help the poor as a choice.

[The article referred to above follows:]

Washington's Little Miracles

GEORGE F. WILL

In Washington's shopping and dining district, on a small triangular island where Connecticut Avenue and 18th and M streets cross, a statue of Longfellow sits, brooding: "Life is real! Life is earnest!" Every evening, when (as he was wont to say) darkness falls from the wings of night, he sees that life is indeed like that. A ramshackle truck—in its youth it was a Good Humor truck—parks beneath his pedestal. From the shadows, and silent as shadows, comes a trickle of street people, many of them homeless, to receive soup, sandwiches and coffee.

Upward of a hundred come, eat ravenously and silently steal away, back into the crevices of the metropolis. One reason drifters drift into this opulent area of the city is that bins behind fine restaurants are full of discarded food. Ah, the balance of nature: expense accounts encourage diners to order to excess, vanity—fear of fat—causes them to leave much uneaten; desperation brings other diners to the remains.

The truck, like another operating in tougher neighborhoods, comes from Martha's Table,* a kindly place on a mean street. Veronica Maz, the head of the Table, and her volunteers operate behind three storefronts at the corner of 14th and W streets, across from what once were stables for the White House. Many windows on the street have been boarded up since the rioting after the assassination of Martin Luther King. Today the block is infested by drug dealers. The sea of social distress surrounding Martha's Table drives normal souls to despair. But if Longfellow had ever met Maz, he never would have wasted ink on that comparatively spiritless youth who bore mid snow and ice a banner with the strange device, "Excelsior!" Maz—short, compact, a hyperkinetic fireplug—is always up and doing with a heart for any fate.

Scrounging: In an unheated room (utility bills are recurring crises), bundled in a cardigan, Maz radiates serenity. She is a sociologist who 12 years ago ran smack into society and experienced an epiphany. She came to Washington to teach about poverty and took students to see some. On a wintry evening on North Capitol Street she saw men clustered around a fire in a metal barrel, cooking soup from chicken claws. Suddenly she knew her vocation. She opened a soup kitchen and began scrounging (her word for what she does).

Maz asked a North Capitol Street resident to contribute a spoon and to get a neighbor to contribute one. Shortly, the resident showed up with 80 spoons. Maz believes there is enough of everything out there, but that the distribution needs attending to. Maz goes from churches to school cafeterias and elsewhere seeking gifts of food and money. From a nonprofit "food bank" she buys supplies—principally bread—for 1,200 sandwiches a day.

Her sandwich factory also functions as a daytime shelter for children. It is not unusual for her to arrive at 7:30 a.m. and find a semidressed four-year-old ("You know how children dress themselves") who has been up since 4 a.m., or has not been to bed and whose parent, or guardian, is out—just "out." At Martha's Table, Maz says, a child finds something it may not have elsewhere, "its own little corner." The small children are looked after by 14-year-old girls who have the grown-up steadiness, at once wonderful and sad, of children who have passed too fast through childhood.

> The homeless have sunk through poverty, into another dimension of precariousness.

Longfellow warned that into each life some rain must fall, some days must be dark and dreary. The people who sup at Maz's mobile tables, or collect clothes from her storeroom, could teach the poet a thing or two about life's deluges. They are not in poverty; poverty suggests an inadequate income. They have sunk through poverty, into another dimension of precariousness.

Many have been poor for a long time and have given up. Others come to the truck first in a clean white shirt; within days they are too dirty to seek work. Many have downward-pulling problems, such as alcoholism or mental illness. Social events, like a recession, and social policies, like the careless deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, swell the ranks of the street people. So do changes in social values: the increasing numbers of young homeless persons reflects an increasing readiness of parents to discard troublesome children. But Maz also believes that the problems she struggles with have almost nothing to do with what Washington worries about: national policies and changes of administration.

Explanations: The food truck moves from Connecticut Avenue to Lafayette Park, across from the White House, not as a political gesture but for a practical purpose: when some bewildered persons arrive in the city, they seem drawn, like iron filings by a magnet, to the one place they know of.

No social safety net, however tight its mesh, could prevent many such persons from falling through. The fortunate ones fall into the care of little miracles like Martha's Table. By "miracles" I mean only that such organizations are gloriously inexplicable. Many thinkers are ready, at the drop of a sociology textbook or a government-grant application form, to explain badness. The explanations are always in terms of this or that correctable flaw in the social environment. Washington has a growth industry devoted to such explanations. There is less interest in goodness, perhaps because it is not a "problem" and hence is boring to the professional classes that consider themselves society's problem solvers.

But how do you explain—really explain—Maz, or her volunteers, most of whom are poor enough to have enough problems of their own? Longfellow said that everyone is either an anvil or a hammer. If anvils are people who are pounded upon by life, the street people are anvils. However, Maz and others like her are hardly hammers, out to pound the world into shapes they prefer. There are plenty of hammers in Washington, thank you. But Maz, who is white, and her helpers, most of whom are black, are . . . well, just say they are good, and be done with it. Whatever invisible hand winds their inner springs had better keep doing so. When winter winds curl around Washington's monuments they carry a chilling damp, a reminder that there are rivers nearby and a swamp not far in the city's past.

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*At 2124 14th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20009, for those who would like to help.

The CHAIRMAN. I want to tell you how moved I am by your testimony.

Let's turn to Ms. Mize at this point, and take your testimony.

Ms. MIZE. Today I am prepared to answer your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, you are just going to answer questions?

Ms. MIZE. Right.

The CHAIRMAN. OK, we will turn to Ms. Whiteing and we will hear from her and then we will have some questions for you Ms. Mize. But, first we will insert an introductory statement by Senator Grassley.

STATEMENT BY SENATOR CHARLES E. GRASSLEY

Senator GRASSLEY. I am happy to be able to participate in this hearing on strategies to reduce hunger. I am particularly pleased to be able to welcome Marie Whiteing, from my own State of Iowa. Marie has been very involved in setting up food distribution networks in western Iowa that try to get food into the hands of rural people, including farmers and their families, who need food.

It may seem like a very strange state of affairs that, in one of the most productive food producing States in the country, there can be a problem of sufficient food for farm families. Yet, as Marie will tell us in her presentation, this is at least to some degree the case. I hope today we can hear from Marie, and from our other witnesses, more about how serious a problem this is in Iowa and some of our other mainly rural Midwestern States.

I realize that the subject is somewhat controversial because not everyone agrees that we do face a problem of hunger in the United States today. This is certainly one of the reasons why it is appropriate to have this hearing—namely, to find out more about the extent of the problem.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Whiteing, you may proceed.

Ms. WHITEING. Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, I thank you for holding these hearings and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak relative to hunger in the heartland.

The Iowa Farm Crisis Network was born in January 1985. We saw our purpose to be one of legislation which would put a profit back in agriculture. And because there is no profit in agriculture, we found ourselves needing to address other issues which prevailed due to the dilemma. How do we reach hurting hungry people? In cooperation with the community action agencies in a 14-county area in northwest Iowa the Iowa Farm Crisis Network will have distributed some 470,000 pounds of commodities extra-Government commodities by the end of June. This project started in January of this year.

And incidentally, the Iowa Farm Crisis Network also addresses mediation needs, information needs, support needs, and integration of small business community and rural needs.

Identifying hungry farm families is a delicate task. While farmers may have wanted higher subsidies from the Federal Government, they have resisted the idea of "a handout," and therefore, because pride has kept them on the farm, pride also prohibits them from seeking necessary help. I have indicated to you in my written text a number of studies that would point out that point.

We are only in a 14-county area in Iowa. And while there are similar cases all over the heartland, and there are many other organizations addressing hunger needs, still there are more and more people without the means to purchase food.

The reasons are many. One, declining land prices; two, negative asset positions; three, high interest; four, little forbearance from lenders, no release of family living needs.

And five, off-the-farm jobs are hard to find because there is so little industry; and six, this pride which has prohibited the plea for help, the list goes on and on.

What are the ramifications of this hunger on rural communities? While small communities are getting smaller, no one wants to admit that the next person to leave may be him or her or a friend or a relative. Furthermore, chances are, if they stay, there probably are no jobs and feeding the family is a priority. Small communities are perfect settings for small industries but we are not creating those opportunities fast enough to keep up with the number of farmers and small businessmen who find themselves needing immediate change.

I have given some examples of the ramifications and one that I would like to highlight—I will not have time to talk about why farmers are ineligible oft times for food stamps but it is listed in my written testimony and I would ask you to pay careful attention to those two problems with food stamps applications.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, we will put the full statement into the record.

Ms. WHITEING. Thank you.

Many farm families are found in the position of needing to sell secured assets in unconventional ways. For instance, selling cattle or grain in a child's name, so that they have family living expenses. This is dishonest and contrary to rural values. Small businesses are carrying greater accounts receivable because of this situation. If a farmer cannot feed his family, and you can be sure that this is the highest priority, then other needs have been abandoned as well. Life and health insurance policies have been cashed in, and medical and dental care is not being attended to, and educational needs for the immediate future have been put aside.

The cost of this neglect will manifest itself in the near future in ways which no doubt are not obvious to us in the present, while 20 percent of the farm families may be eliminated, where they will go is in question. The obligations and debts of these families will remain. Hunger may follow them in many cases. But someone will farm the land as the land is the stable entity.

We cannot forget that our public schools in Iowa, they are being greatly impacted due to tax losses that is caused by the farm crisis and we have more and more students on free and reduced lunches. Small businesses are struggling to keep pace with the declining markets. All of this leads to hunger.

We know of cases where families are existing on the rice and potatoes from the commodity food pantries. All of this for the sector of our society which is the most efficient producer of quality food.

Finally, I have outlined some solutions. The farm crisis will continue unless a sound means of creating profitability in agriculture is found. Some means of providing short-term assistance include, lower interest, shared debt writeoff, presently this can only be done through the courts. Credit availability—if the present trend continues, we recommend that in 1987, the Government program include a 30-percent set-aside with a 100 percent of the productivity index on that set-aside being paid up front in PICK. So that the farmers have some collateral to borrow against for operating expenses.

Continued attention to tax reform, keeping the interest of the family farmer and the small business person a priority. While these solutions are relative to the farm crisis, hunger in the heartland can be addressed only when the hemorrhage of equity is stopped.

A short-term solution also rests with the changes that need to be made in the food stamp application process and I have indicated those earlier in my text. The chapter 12 bankruptcy legislation will greatly enhance the ability of farm families to restructure debt through the courts, however, voluntary mandatory restructuring with the assistance of mediators, by lenders would be preferrable. And there are no funds available for mediation at the present time.

And finally, we do not need more Government agencies or programs to address the issue of hungry rural people. We have seen training programs train people for nonexistent jobs. And we do need to diversify but this will take time and in the meantime, the Labor Committee can be instrumental through ensuring Federal resources for which it has responsibility making sure that they are available for health and human services and educational needs.

We need to create and maintain new industry as our communities become more labor intensive. A good reason for less Government programs and more seed moneys and the enabling of the private sector rests in this example. In 1986, we, the Government, will spend $21 billion in direct farm aid, but will only generate $18 billion in net farm income. The present aid is not prohibiting the decline of the rural economy, nor is it adding to profitability. We need more coordination and cooperation with existing Government, private, profit and nonprofit entities. The coaction of our pluralism in this country must certainly gain us more adequate solutions than the insensible self-perpetuating independence which we tend to lean toward.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Whiteing and responses to questions submitted to her follow:]

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES
MAY 21 1986

MARIE WHITEING
WESTERN IOWA FARM CRISIS NETWORK

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TESTIMONY
"HUNGER IN THE HEARTLAND"

The statistics are self-evident. There is hunger in America. I will be addressing a specific dimension of hunger which is targeted at the heartland of America. resulting from the rural crisis. It is my intent to relate from my personal experience, (little research is included due to the limited preparation time, attachments are included) 1. How hunger is manifested in the heartland, 2. What are the ramifications of this hunger for rural communities and 3. Solutions which may require legislation to become effective.

I. How Hunger is Manifested In the Heartland

The Iowa Farm Crisis Network was born in January of 1985 and we saw our purpose to be one of promoting legislation which would put a profit back in agriculture. Because there is no profit, (price equal to cost of production, plus marginal gain) we found ourselves needing to address other issues which prevailed due to this dilemma. How do we reach hurting, hungry people? In cooperation with the Community Action Agencies in a fourteen county area in northwest Iowa, the Iowa Farm Crisis Network will have distributed some 470,000 lbs. of extra government commodities by the end of June. (This project started in January of 1986.) Rural people in crisis helping rural people in crisis. The project is minimally funded by a private source, the remaining cost is assumed by the people who volunteer. Incidentally, the Iowa Farm Crisis Network also addresses mediation needs, information needs, support needs and integration of small business community and rural needs.

Identifying hungry farm families is a delicate task. While farmers may have wanted higher subsidies from the federal government, they have resisted the idea of a "hand-out". Therefore, because pride has kept them on the farm, pride also prohibits them from seeking necessary help. A couple of case studies will demonstrate my point:

A. We network through churches. A pastor of a rural church was very hesitant to get involved with commodity distribution. He felt that he would have to admit that there were people in his church who needed food, much less medical care, emotional support and perhaps even financial support. When a colleague friend of his encouraged him to load up his station wagon at the central distribution location, he did so. He took the risk and enlisted some of his parishioners to distribute the commodities to persons they knew, who needed help. The result was that on the following Sunday he sensed a change in his parish, they were warm and caring, not cold and hopeless.

B. A farm family from a distant community came to a weekly crisis meeting. They heard about the commodity distribution and commodities were available that evening. They said there were five families near them who needed food. We loaded their car, they distributed the food and now we have six more families represented at our meetings.

C. A widow lady, whose family has been the wealthy, outstanding family of a community, called to say that her debt load is so great that she can no longer service it. She has been actively involved in the community, serving on the board of the local bank, and they will no longer loan her any operating capital or living expense. Her real concern is relative to how she will secure another lending institution, where will she get the money to put in her crops and how will she live!

Every case study is different, but the causes and effects are the same. We're only in fourteen counties in Iowa, and while there are similar cases all over the heartland,and there are many other organizations addressing the hunger needs, still there are more and more people without the means to purchase food. The reasons are many: 1. declining land prices, 2. negative asset position, 3. high interest, 4. little forbearence from lenders (no release of family living needs), 5. few off the farm jobs because there is so little industry, 6. pride which prohibits the plea for help---and the list continues.

II. What Are the Ramifications of This Hunger on Rural Communities?

While small communities are getting smaller, no one wants to admit that the next person to leave may be him/her or a friend or relative. Furthermore, chances are if they stay, there probably are no jobs, and feeding the family is a priority. Small communities are perfect settings for small industries, but we're not creating those opportunities fast enough to keep up with the number of farmers and small business who find themselves needing immediate change. We're seeing hunger affecting communities in many ways:

1. Farm families in the past could have had their own cattle and hogs butchered--but now because there is no ready cash and very little credit available, they can not pay for the processing. However, more families are processing their own meat.

2. While farm families are resourceful, and they are able to raise their own vegetables, remember that our pattern has been to purchase food items from a market in town, thus keeping the market inbusiness as well. Gardening for survival requires a change in focus and attitude.

3. Often a farm family is notified that they will no longer be serviced by a lender, it happens very suddenly and there is no forewarning by lenders, and farmers have not wanted to admit to the inevitable. Living expenses are stopped.

4. Many farm families are found in the position of needing to sell secured assets in unconventional ways, (selling cattle or grain in a child's name) so that they have family living money. This is dishonest and contrary to rural values. Small businesses are carrying greater accounts receivable because of this situation. If a farmer can not fefeed a family, and you can be sure that this is a highest priority, then other needs have been abandoned as well. Life and health insurance policies have been cashed in, medical and dental care is not being attended to, and educational needs for the immediate future have been put aside. The COST of this neglect will manifest itself in the near future in ways which no doubt are not obvious to us in the present. While 20% of the farm families may be eliminated (where they will go is in question) the obligations and debts of these families will remain, hunger am follow them in many cases, but someone will farm the land as the land is the stable entity.

5. The last resort is the application for food stamps or commodity assistance. The great possibility exits that the farm family will be rejected for the food stamp program: A. Depreciation is not considered as a cost of doing business for food stamp purposes. On a schedule F for instance, if the total income is listed as $80,000, the total expenses $90,000, and depreciation $25,000, the depreciation is deducted from the

$90,000, leaving a $15,0000 income after expenses. Depreciation a is paper transaction rather than a real money transaction and the farm family is penalized

B. When a lender has a fist lien on property, the checks are written in the names of the lenders and lendees. Usually this money is not divided, but rather the lendee signs the check and the lender takes the total amount to be paid against the total ammount of indebtedness, however the total amount to the check is considered as income for food stamp purposes. C. In our interactions it appears that verbal and written policies from the Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA are slow in filtering to the county Department of Human Services workers and often interpreted differently than perhaps intended--communication confusion!

We must not forget that public schools in Iowa (our great virtue of quality education) are being greatly impacted due to the tax losses caused by the a farm crisis and also more students are on free and reduced lunches. Small businesses are struggling to keep pace with the declining markets.

This all leads to hunger! We know of cases where families are existing on rice and potatoes from commodity food pantries. All of this for the sector of our society which is the most efficient.

III. Solutions

A. The farm Crisis will continue unless a sound means of creating profitability in agriculture is found. Some of the means of providing short-term assistance include: 1. Lower interest, 2. Shared debt write-off (presently this can only be accomplished through the courts), 3. Credit availability--if the present trend continues, we recommend that in 1987 the government program include a 30% set aside iwth 100% pf the produtivity index on that set aside being paid up front in PIK in the Spring, allowing the farmer to borrow against the PIK payment as collateral for operating expenses.

4. Continued attention ot tax-reform keeping the interests of the family farmers and small business person a priority. While these solutions are relative to the farm crisis, the hunger in the heartland can be addressed only when the hemorrhage of equity is topped.

B. A short-term solution also rests with the changes which need be made in the food stamp application process, 1. attention to the depreciation issue and 2. attention to the two-party check issues which I have addressed earlier in this text.

C. The Chapter 12 Bankruptcy legislation will greatly enhance the ability of farm families to restructure debt through the courts. Voluntary/mandatory restructuring with the assistance of mediators by lenders would be preferable . (There are no funds available for mediators presently.)

D. We do not need more government agencies or programs to address the issue of hungry rural people. We have seen training programs train people for non-existent jobs. We do need to diversify and this will take time. We need to create and maintain new industry as our communities become more labor intensive. A good reason for less government programs and more seed monies and enabling of the private sector rests in this example: In 1986 we the government will spend $21 billion in direct farm aid, but we'll only generate $18 billion in net farm income. The present aid is not prohibiting the decline of the rural economy nor is it adding to profitability.

We need more coordination and cooperation with existing government, private, profit, non-profit entities------The co-action of our pluralism in this country must certainly gain us more adequate solution than the insensible self-perpetuating independence which we tend to lean toward.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before this hearing. I hope that I have fairly represented the grass-roots foundation upon which this nation is built. Some articles which reinforce these statements are attached.

QUESTIONS FOR MARIE WHITEING FROM SENATOR GRASSLEY:

1. SOME OF THOSE PRESENT MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND HOW A FARM FAMILY CAN GO HUNGRY OR NEED FOOD STAMPS GIVEN THAT THEY CAN GROW THEIR OWN FOOD. CAN YOU EXPLAIN HOW THIS CAN BE POSSIBLE?

2. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM WE ARE TALKING ABOUT HERE AS FAR AS IOWA IS CONCERNED? FIRST, ARE THERE PEOPLE IN IOWA WHO ARE IN DANGER OF STARVING, AND HOW MANY PEOPLE MIGHT THERE BE IN THAT CATEGORY?

   OR, SECOND, ARE PEOPLE TURNING TO FOOD STAMPS BECAUSE THEY ARE ACTUALLY GOING HUNGRY, OR ARE THEY TURNING TO FOOD STAMPS MORE TO REDUCE EXPENDITURES,TO HELP THEM THROUGH A DIFFICULT PERIOD IN THEIR PERSONAL FINANCES?

3. YOU DISCUSSED IN YOUR STATEMENT SOME OF THE PROBLEMS OF BECOMING ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS. COULD YOU SUMMARIZE FOR US THE OBSTACLES FARM FAMILIES ENCOUNTER WHEN THEY WANT TO BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS?

4. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF HOW MANY MORE FAMILIES IN THE AREA YOU WORK IN MIGHT BE USING FOOD STAMPS WERE THERE NOT PROBLEMS OF GAINING ELIGIBILITY IN THE PROGRAM?

5. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF HOW MANY PEOPLE IN WESTERN IOWA ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF SURPLUS OR DONATED FOODS THROUGH PRIVATE FOOD DISTRIBUTION EFFORTS?

6. IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT RURAL PEOPLE, AND ESPECIALLY FARMERS, ARE UNWILLING TO APPLY FOR WELFARE PROGRAMS SUCH AS FOOD STAMPS. HOW COMMON DO YOU THINK THIS IS?

7. ARE DIFFICULTIES OF ESTABLISHING ELIGIBILITY A BIGGER PROBLEM THAN THE WILLINGNESS OF FARMERS TO TAKE WELFARE?

8. IN IOWA, IT IS TRUE, IS IT NOT, THAT, ALTHOUGH THE HEART OF THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM THE STATE IS FACING IS THE POOR RETURN THE FARMERS ARE GETTING ON THEIR INVESTMENT, THE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTY HAS SPREAD INTO RURAL TOWNS?

9. ARE THE EFFECTS OF THE DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY FARMERS BEING FELT IN THE LARGER, COUNTY SEAT, TOWNS AS WELL AS IN THE SMALLER RURAL TOWNS?

SO, HAVE YOU BEGUN TO SEE THE SAME CONCERNS ABOUT THE ABILITY TO GET FOOD IN THE RURAL TOWNS AND COUNTY SEATS?

10. DO YOU THINK MOST OF THE PEOPLE YOU ARE INVOLVED WITH THROUGH THE WESTERN IOWA FARM CRISIS NETWORK WILL GET OUT OF THEIR DIFFICULTIES IN A RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME, OR ARE WE FACING A NEW CLASS OF LONG TERM RURAL POOR?

11. YOU HAVE MENTIONED TO ME YOUR CONCERN ABOUT THE OLDER FARMER WHO MAY HAVE LOST A FARM. COULD YOU SAY A WORD OR TWO ABOUT THAT?

12. DON'T THE PRESENT DIFFICULTIES DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECT YOUNGER FARMERS WHO ARE NOT AS WELL ESTABLISHED AS OLDER FARMERS?

13. ONE OF OUR LATER WITNESSES, IN HER WRITTEN STATEMENT, NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON FOOD ASSISTANCE SUGGESTED RAISING ASSET LIMITS FOR FOOD STAMP ELIGIBILITY. DO YOU THINK THAT SUCH A STEP WOULD HELP FARMERS?

QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR GRASSLEY:

1. A farm family has in the past 10-15 years trusted that their lendor would loan them operating/living expenses in return any earned capital would be given to the bank. As long as there was equity (security) in the land, this policy worked. When land values declined, debt was still existing, as well as high interest rates and high production costs. This all meant an inability to show a positive cash-flow. In a sense, the bank owns the farmer amd tjere os mp capital for planting gardens or butchering hogs or cattle. The bank owns the livestock.

2. I can not give numbers relative to how many people are starving since little research has been done in the area of the "new poor". I believe that the symptoms of the depressed rural economy should be a concern to us as we look toward a brighter future.

People are turning toward food stamps to help them through a difficult period with their personal finances presently. I do not see indicators which demonstrate that theircircumstances will soon change.

3. Yes, first it is such an humiliating experience to make the application and secondly, as I explained in my testimony, there are two major obsticles which farmers face, I. the two party check issue and II. the consideration of the deficiency payment as income.

4. I think that the documentation which I included in my testimony from the Department of Human Services will answer this question. The eligibility problems are very difficult to document.

5. We will know more of the figures after we finish the commodity distribution in June.

(2)

6. That has been the trend, but out of necessity I believe that this trend is changing.

7. Both are equally shared problems.

8. Yes,there have been numerous articles which demonstrate what is happening to our small towns. You will note in the attachments to my testimony an article relative to the impact on county seat towns.

9. Yes

10. I think that most of the people we encounter through the Western Iowa Farm Crisis Network are looking at a lon hard struggle. Remember, there are many, many who are giving up before they come to us.

11. The older farmer is faced with the grim fact that he may have depended on the equity of his farm for his retirement and, now faced with the possibility of loosing the farm, he probably hasn't had enough income to pay into social security for several years and there will be no income in the future.

12. Yes, but the younger farmer is far more mobile and has some years to look at recovery. It is also true that there are retired farmers who have made great profits, who are not feeling the effects. It is the farmer from 55-65 who will have the difficulty making any necessary transition.

13. Yes, indeed I do.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Whiteing.

Again, your testimony is very interesting to us, and we think, very, much.

Senator KENNEDY. I think that is a very interesting and moving story. As I understand, Ms. Mize, you are from Crystal, MN, is that right?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, it is.

Senator KENNEDY. How old are you and your husband?

Ms. MIZE. I am 30 and my husband is 33.

Senator KENNEDY. And you have three small children, is that correct?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, we do.

Senator KENNEDY. And how old are they?

Ms. MIZE. Almost 5, 3, and 11 months.

Senator KENNEDY. And your husband's trade is waterproofing basements and the waterproofing company that he originally worked for went out of business, is that right?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, it is.

Senator KENNEDY. And then he worked as a tire salesman and last summer he had an opportunity to go to work for another waterproofing company and did he do so?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, he did.

Senator KENNEDY. And then 4 months later, in early October of last year, that company went out of business, is that right?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, it is.

Senator KENNEDY. And because the company went out of business, you and your husband did not get his last paycheck?

Ms. MIZE. That is correct.

Senator KENNEDY. You did not get it?

Ms. MIZE. No, we did not.

Senator KENNEDY. Was it then almost 2 months before he received his first unemployment check or food stamps?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, it was.

Senator KENNEDY. And do you have a part-time job?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, I do.

Senator KENNEDY. And how much do you make a week?

Ms. MIZE. About $65.

Senator KENNEDY. So during that period when you were waiting for the first unemployment check and food stamps your only income was $60 a week?

Ms. MIZE. Right.

Senator KENNEDY. And what did you do for food during that period of time?

Ms. MIZE. We went to the food shelves and we also applied for food stamps.

Senator KENNEDY. And could you have gotten along without the food shelf?

Ms. MIZE. No.

Senator KENNEDY. Was this a new experience for you?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, it was.

Senator KENNEDY. Why?

Ms. MIZE. I had never had to use the food stamps before or the food shelves. I felt very bad about having to do it.

Senator **KENNEDY**. And I understand that in your job with the public service organization you are assigned 1 day a week to the food shelf to help people with their fuel problems, is that right?

Ms. **MIZE**. Yes, it is.

Senator **KENNEDY**. Which is how you knew about the food shelves?

Ms. **MIZE**. Yes, that is correct.

Senator **KENNEDY**. Could you tell us something about the food shelf's operation, and how many families it serves?

Ms. **MIZE**. I do my energy assistance work at Prism Food Shelves, they serve approximately 800 people a month. They also have a program where once a week families can come in and pick up a pot luck dinner, which is enough for one balanced meal and they serve about 70 people a week doing that.

And in my work, I also see a lot of people who come in who need to use the food shelves, but do not know about them. I see the elderly and families with young children who do not know about food stamp programs. And I also tell them about the Food Stamp program and the food shelves.

Senator **KENNEDY**. This was as important as your experience there, what Congressman Panetta and others have said is the real problems in communication and many people being eligible and they do not know about this. And I think that your experience is helpful, for us to know that in terms of trying to do something about it.

Now, once you started getting the food stamps did you find that they ran out before the month was over?

Ms. **MIZE**. Yes, I did.

Senator **KENNEDY**. And were you eligible for AFDC at the time?

Ms. **MIZE**. No, we were not. My husband's unemployment was $1 below the AFDC limit plus my employment put us over the limit, so that we did not receive any AFDC then.

Senator **KENNEDY**. And in March of this year, you and your husband received a refund from last year's income tax, about $1,000, is that right?

Ms. **MIZE**. Right.

Senator **KENNEDY**. And did this put you over the eligibility for food stamps?

Ms. **MIZE**. Yes, it did.

Senator **KENNEDY**. Have you gotten behind in paying your rent and other bills?

Ms. **MIZE**. Yes, we have.

Senator **KENNEDY**. Did you have to use the refund to pay on those?

Ms. **MIZE**. Yes, we did.

Senator **KENNEDY**. So without the food stamps did you have to go back to the food shelf for help?

Ms. **MIZE**. Yes. I have been using their pot luck program and I have gone to the food shelf once since then.

Senator **KENNEDY**. And I understand that when your baby was born, last summer, you were not covered by health insurance, because your husband had not been at that job long enough to be eligible, is that right?

Ms. **MIZE**. That is correct.

Senator KENNEDY. And 2 months later the baby was hospitalized with pneumonia which was also not covered, is that right?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, that is.

Senator KENNEDY. Do you still owe the hospital bill?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, I do.

Senator KENNEDY. How much are they?

Ms. MIZE. About $1,700.

Senator KENNEDY. Did your husband's unemployment compensation run out recently?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, it did, about 3 weeks ago.

Senator KENNEDY. And I understand that he has decided to start his own waterproofing business. How is that going?

Ms. MIZE. I think that it is going to go pretty good.

Senator KENNEDY. Are you going to reapply for the food stamps?

Ms. MIZE. I think that I am going to wait another week and see how his business goes because they go back I believe it is 3 months as far as your income and with our taxes back, that will still show, but we will try to reapply, yes.

Senator KENNEDY. Does it bother you to have to do that?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, it does.

Senator KENNEDY. Are your children on the WIC Program?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, they are on the WIC Program and that has been very helpful to us.

Senator KENNEDY. You find that it has been very satisfactory?

It worked well for you?

Ms. MIZE. It has worked well for our family. Formula is expensive and there have been times, I am sure, that if it were not for the WIC Program, that we probably would not have been able to afford the amount we needed.

Senator KENNEDY. You know we are very appreciative of your being with us and we hope that you just take your time. We know that it is always difficult to talk about these experiences like this. And I hope that you realize that by doing that, hopefully we gain information and we gain some human dimension that regrettably I think, as pointed out earlier in the hearing, Americans care, and I think that the Members of the Senate care and if we could get them all over here to hear this panel, we would not have as much trouble getting the kind of attention to this and the kind of commitment that we ought to have.

The WIC Program has made an important difference to your children, as I understand it?

Ms. MIZE. Yes, it has. With WIC Program, they receive cereal, juice, beans, and the milk, cheese and eggs which are all very important to their growth, both physically and mentally.

Senator KENNEDY. Do you think that the Food Stamp Program is adequate?

Ms. MIZE. I think that there is a lot that can be done for it. No, I do not think that it is adequate.

Senator KENNEDY. It does not meet all of your family's nutritional needs?

Ms. MIZE. Well, right. When the food stamps run out after a week or 2 weeks, then there is no way that a person who is on a minimum income can buy the groceries and get the right nutrition for their family.

Senator **Kennedy**. I am sure you agree with me, that the food shelf and other private providers around the country have made a tremendous difference in meeting the needs, and tell us from your own experience working at the food shelf, whether the people's needs are being met or whether additional help is needed?

Ms. **Mize**. I think that they do need some additional help. They can come in and the food shelves give them about a 3-day supply of food. If your food stamps run out after 2½ to 3 weeks, 3 days is not going to make it into the next month when you get your food stamps. By then, their money has gone to pay rent and other utility bills and I think that the Food Stamp Program does need more help.

Senator **Kennedy**. Thank you very much. I think that it is important to know what is happening, if people are falling through the gaps. Everybody has talked about that in one form or another, features of it, and the kind of strain that it puts on the families, particularly among the children. And then once they get back sort of on track, the inadequacies in so many instances of some of those programs. The healthy aspects the WIC Program, the insufficiency in the Food Stamp Program, all of these comments of the panel have been enormously helpful.

The **Chairman**. Thank you, Senator Kennedy. Ms. Mize we really thank you for your testimony. It is a very moving testimony and it does show that hardworking people can fall through the cracks as well as others.

And I think that is very important for all of us to understand, so that you really have made a great contribution here, today.

Ms. **Mize**. Thank you.

[Information supplied for the record follows:]

FURTHER COMMENTS ON REMARKS MADE DURING THE HEARING ON "STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HUNGER IN AMERICA."

"Americans are overweight or obese"

My comments:

Yes, there are Americans who are overweight or obese. This is a fact, not only for people on foodstamps but for Americans in all financial brackets.

My observation has been that many people on foodstamps or AFDC try to make their food dollars stretch by buying items such as noodles, pasta, and other high calorie foods. Many welfare families whose grant amount covers rent and utilities don't have extra money to buy their children things like bikes/trikes or have them participate in summer programs such as baseball, daycamps, or other year-round activities such as roller skating. These families find themselves buying their children such treats as candy bars, pop, etc., trying to make up for the other things they cannot afford to buy their children.

This may be part of the reason some (not all) foodstamp recipients are overweight.

The CHAIRMAN. And we appreciate it.

I would like to ask a few questions of each of these good witnesses.

Let us start with you, Ms. Tyson.

One of the criticisms about the efforts of celebrities, to address problems like hunger is difficulty in maintaining followup. Could you tell me, what consideration has the organizers—and we will be happy to have you, Ms. Brazile answer this if you like—what consideration have the organizers of Hands Across America given to encourage a lasting impact on the tremendous effort that is really being generated to address the problem of domestic hunger.

Ms. TYSON. I am sorry, I did not hear you.

The CHAIRMAN. Basically, we get celebrities who express strong support for issues like domestic hunger but the question is, What kind of followup is going to occur after the initial publicity? Is an effort being made to insure followup and that the movement and program are continued?

Ms. TYSON. The hope is that this will be the beginning of a long-term interest of all Americans that the money that will be raised will be channeled into specific areas, specific organizations to help alleviate the problem of hunger.

It is not a flash in the pan organization. It is hopefully going to be long term.

The CHAIRMAN. I'm very glad to hear that. I am impressed by the strategy that Hands Across America is using to encourage individual initiative and individual commitment to address the hungry.

Not only is there a symbolic commitment by locking hands all across America, but also a financial commitment.

Are you also encouraging the people who commit symbolically and financially, to work as volunteers and help some of these volunteer organizations that are doing so much good?

Ms. TYSON. Yes. Most of the people involved in the organization are volunteers, Senator Hatch.

The CHAIRMAN. That is very good.

Let me now turn to you, Dr. Maz. Is there a sufficient amount of food being brought into this city, prepared but not sold, to feed all of those who are in need?

Dr. MAZ. There is plenty of food. If you only consider leftovers, because we are a wasteful nation and if I asked every single person here, just to start thinking about wherever he goes, if you are going to lunch today, what are they doing in the restaurant with the leftovers? If you are going to a graduation party? If you are going to—yesterday we came here and we picked up a whole truckload of leftovers. So if you always think of leftovers and sharing, there is plenty of food.

But the problem is, how do you get it from where it is, to supply the needy people?

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I feel you have come up with some very effective ways.

Dr. MAZ. Although everyone recognizes the necessity of emergency food programs, such programs are sometimes criticized for not doing more to enhance or develop the self-sufficiency of those who are in need, those who are using such programs. By providing regularly scheduled soup kitchens, and similar programs, are we simply subsidizing and perhaps reinforcing recipients as marginal members of society?

I do not think so at all because before you can find work, before you can do anything, you need something on your stomach. And you know, people always say, well, why is he not working? Well, how can he work if he does not have breakfast? How can he work if he has not eaten?

You have had breakfast this morning and probably everyone else has here, so why do we expect the homeless not also to have food and nourishment?

The CHAIRMAN. That is very good.

Dr. Maz, from your experiences, what do you feel the Government should be doing to stimulate further private sector responsibility for reducing hunger in our country?

Dr. MAZ. You can help us tremendously because all the things that we need, for example, I mentioned the wagons, I wonder if the Army does not have vehicles that they dispense food and so what do they do with those after they are a little older? And they could be circulated all over the country.

But the way that I scrounge for food from little restaurants, people on a national level, just like you, could contact restaurant associations, hotel, the large hotel chains, the airlines, and what do they do with the leftovers at Army bases? All of those places, and we actually do not have contact with as an individual. And so that is the way that you could help.

The CHAIRMAN. Why is there a need—why is there a need for additional children feeding programs, when we have school lunches and other child nutritional programs already in existence and paid for by the Government?

Dr. MAZ. Well, real simply. Because people eat more than once a day, so that if a child is in school he eats lunch and if you had lunch you will eat dinner and you eat other food, and just as people pointed out here, at the end of the month, after a few weeks, the food stamps go no matter what type of assistance you have.

And poor families really, really struggle. The last week they hardly have anything to eat. So even if you do eat lunch at school, later on, you need additional food.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me now turn to you, Ms. Whiteing. You have indicated in your statement that there are hungry people in Iowa, one of the great farm States in this Nation.

In your opinion, is this a problem that we have always had with us or is it more of a problem of recent origin? If it is of more recent origin, when did it start and what really caused it?

Ms. WHITEING. I recently did a training session for the Department of Human Service workers and the Community Action Agency workers in the 14-county area where we are working and they were very frustrated by the numbers of farmers who were coming in and demanding some special attention. They indicated to me that they have been serving the needs of the needy for many, many years but this is a new type of needy. And I believe that the new poor in Iowa are with us due to all of the ramifications that I have indicated in my text—the declining land values, the negative asset value. Many, many years farmers borrowed on the value of their land against the value of their land and suddenly they go into the lender and the lender says, if you cannot show a cash-flow we will not give you any more moneys and that may be a 2-day notice.

And in which case, they are cut-off without any living expenses at all. And they cannot sell cattle because the cattle are mortgaged by the lender, and I think that the problem is mushrooming and I think that it will continue to grow as our agriculture economy continues to be suppressed.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I want to thank each of you for being here. Ms. Tyson, you can tell your husband, Miles Davis, the great musician, that record royalty bill passed out of the subcommittee this morning.

Ms. TYSON. Oh, I am sure that he will be pleased to hear that. Thank you very much, Senator Hatch.

The CHAIRMAN. Thanks so much, and it was nice to have you all here.

Let me just say for the benefit of everybody here, after the third panel, the Hands Across America video will be shown immediately following the hearing, in this room and I think that a lot of people will be very interested in this video.

The next panel represent individuals who have studied the issues of hunger in America. And our first witness is Ms. Anna Kondratas from the Heritage Foundation. The second is Dr. Stanley Gershoff, dean of the School of Nutrition of Tufts University, at Medford, MA, and our third witness is Ms. Lynn Parker, a nutritionist representing the Food Research and Action Center here in Washington, DC.

STATEMENTS OF ANNA KONDRATAS, WASHINGTON, DC, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION; DR. STANLEY GERSHOFF, MEDFORD, MA, TUFTS UNIVERSITY; AND, LYNN PARKER, WASHINGTON, DC, FOOD RESEARCH AND ACTION CENTER

The CHAIRMAN. We have read all your statements and they are very good. We will put them in the record in their entirety. At this point, however, I would prefer to ask questions of each of you about your statements rather than have you orally present them. Is that agreeable?

Let me start with you, Ms. Kondratas.

As I understand, the theory behind food stamps, was that they supplement other incomes so that there is an actual improvement in diet.

Some claim that the income replaced by food stamps is spent, not on an improved diet, but on other goods. Do you agree with that statement and what can we do to better educate Americans on improving their diet through the Food Stamp Program?

Ms. KONDRATAS. I think that the evidence initially seems to be contradictory. For example, there are studies that show that food stamp recipients consistently spend a lot more than their food stamp allowance on food, and it is suggested that otherwise, they could not eat adequately. But evidence also shows that when they get additional food stamps, or they did not get food stamps before and now they get them, that the increment in income is not all spent on food, it is spent on other things.

And that is consistent with the Food Stamp Program providing people with choice. I think that the responsibility of the Federal Government is to make sure that everybody has an adequate income to purchase adequate food. But if they choose to use their money other ways, there is very little the Federal Government can do about it other than to teach good nutritional practices and so on.

The Congressional Budget Office and the Department of Agriculture both have done studies that show that incrementally, food stamps do not result, dollar for dollar, in increased purchases of food.

I do not want to leave the impression that people who get food stamps do not need them. Different people manage money differently and they have different priorities in their lives and there is nothing wrong with that. Nutritional studies, even before the Food Stamp Program show that about two-thirds of the poor have perfectly adequate diets even without any assistance and one-third do not. If you are poor, you are less likely to have a good diet. And that is the purpose of nutritional assistance.

But it is not nutritional assistance alone that solves poverty problems.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Kondratas, you indicated in your testimony the very link between nutrition and income. Is there a link between hunger and income?

Ms. KONDRATAS. The link between hunger and income is certainly there. You are much more likely to be hungry if you are poor in America than non poor. There is also a distinction to be made between hunger and malnutrition. Feelings of hunger are subjective impressions and many people experience them. Hunger that is involuntary that leads to malnutrition is a public policy problem and I think that if you are poor, you are certainly more likely to eat poorly. But on the other hand, I would like to say both from my research and from reviewing many, many studies, that poverty in America does not mean that you necessarily have a poor diet, that very much depends on—and health and education and welfare studies have shown this, and Agriculture Department studies have shown this—very much depends on family food practices and how knowledgeable a family is about nutrition.

And I can honestly say—I am an immigrant myself and my family were refugees in Europe after World War II, and we experienced near famine conditions there, and we came to America and we experienced what is considered hunger in America—I can honestly say it is not pleasant. I can remember the day when a small potato on my plate looked like heaven. But the thing is that it is possible to eat well in America, even if you are poor. It takes a lot more effort than just being given food, handouts, however.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that classification. You reported that between 1955 and 1965, USDA dietary surveys showed deteriorating dietary habits of Americans in general. Has this condition improved or is it still going on since 1965?

Ms. KONDRATAS. I have not seen any studies or the last few years, but judging from media reports urging Americans to eat healthier diets, and decreased alcohol consumption rates, and the increase in jogging and other physical activities, I think that all

Americans are becoming much more health conscious so that diets may be turning around.

But it is true that in wealthy societies such as the United States, the tendency is to overspend on food and to increase the consumption of fats, sugars, and other things which are not particularly good for you. And this is a problem even when the poor start becoming middle class—their diets may actually deteriorate even though they are eating more food and feel less hungry.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Kondratas, OK, you criticize many of the current studies on the incidence of hunger in America, on the basis of shoddy methodology.

What would you recommend as an appropriate method to obtain dependable data on the incidence of hunger in America?

Ms. KONDRATAS. I do not think that I am qualified to recommend a single appropriate methodology. I think that there are hundreds of scientists and nutritionists who are trying to work out an appropriate methodology. There are studies done by various health agencies, and by the USDA. There are current efforts under way by Federal agencies to develop a proper methodology so that we could survey the American population and have current information, because most of our surveys are old. Some of these studies, for example, that purport to demonstrate rising hunger are based on nutritional data from 1976 to 1980 and they use the 1983 poverty data, go back to 1976–80 nutritional data and then draw conclusions. You cannot do that. And it is not that they are being dishonest intentionally, it is just that we do not have up-to-date nutritional data.

I think that the Government definitely ought to place high priority on developing a methodology and on maintaining an annual and current report on the nutritional status of all Americans, including the poor, so that we can identify at risk groups and so that we can target assistance to them.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Kondratas and her responses to questions by Senator Grassley follow:]

HEARING ON HUNGER IN AMERICA

TESTIMONY OF S. ANNA KONDRATAS

SCHULTZ SENIOR FELLOW IN HEALTH AND URBAN AFFAIRS

THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

before the

SENATE LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

U.S. SENATE

May 21, 1986

Introduction

The United States produces food in sufficient quantities to feed not only itself but also to export huge amounts. Indeed, its well-publicized government-stored food surpluses are more of a problem than food scarcity. Obesity and over-eating are more frequent health problems in the U.S. than malnutrition from lack of food. Famine of the type encountered in such areas as drought-stricken Africa is unknown here. There is no shortage of any variety of food item in our supermarkets and food stores. Food is relatively cheaper than it has been at any time in our history.

None of this, of course, guarantees that the pattern of distribution of food in our society safeguards all individuals and groups from experiencing hunger and malnutrition. Lack of money to buy food, even if temporary, can result in hunger. Ignorance of proper nutrition can result in malnutrition. Senility, parental neglect, loneliness, and physical and psychological handicaps can all contribute to hunger problems, as can ignorance of the availability of public and private nutrition resources.

But recent media reports about hunger in America suggest the problem is pervasive and increasingly getting worse. Some suggest there may be as many as 20 million "hungry" Americans. The organizers of Hands Across America, fresh from their successes in fund-raising to alleviate African famine, blithely announce on national network television that "there is widespread hunger and famine in America." Frequently, such assertions are accompanied by vague implications that this is occurring because of the mean-spirited political climate allegedly created by the Reagan Administration. Sometimes, a direct association is made between supposedly rising hunger and budget cuts; ostensibly, the federal government is retreating from its obligations and is not doing "enough" to guarantee all Americans the "basic human right" of a "decent diet."

But consider these facts: in the late 1970s, both scientific studies and many of today's hunger mongers informed us that hunger and malnutrition due to lack of income were non-problems in America; only isolated cases remained. Since then, federal spending on food programs has gone up, not down. Not only greater numbers of the poor but also a greater proportion of the poverty population are receiving food stamps than before. One of ten Americans is a food stamp recipient. Supplementary private-sector food assistance is expanding rapidly. Food costs comprise a smaller proportion of personal income than five years ago, and per capita caloric consumption is up. So what would explain rising hunger?

The truth is that the problem is probably no better or worse than it was in the late 1970s. The perception of widespread hunger is rooted in subjective impression rather than objective fact. The hunger mongers rely on anecdotal evidence and isolated cases to lend emotional credence to scientifically unsound and sometimes audaciously ludicrous pseudo-statistical "studies" claiming that up to 10 percent of the American population is virtually starving. And anyone who expects advocates for the poor and hungry to adhere to minimal academic and scientific standards is immediately labeled "insensitive." But there is absolutely no credible evidence that hunger in America is either widespread or worsening.

At the same time, there is no doubt that intractable pockets of poverty remain in America, and that for many millions, the problem of providing adequate nutrition for their families is a daily concern. The federal government could improve its efforts to alleviate the misery of those who find themselves unable to acquire sufficient food by taking several steps: It should improve the collection and dissemination of relevant nutritional data on an ongoing basis so that the current nutritional status of the general population, including the poor, and the incidence of malnutrition are not matters of wild speculation. It should continue to reform food assistance programs to ensure better targeting and use of available resources. And it should step up educational efforts on proper nutrition by coordinating the efforts of both public and private health and educational organizations in this area.

The Meaning of Hunger in America

Malnutrition is a clinical state easily measured by physicians. Hunger, on the other hand, is "subclinical," in other words, it is a subjective impression best "measured" by the person actually experiencing it. While this may seem patently obvious, the distinction is important, because different people understand different things by the word "hunger," and this poses a serious public policy question which must be addressed. It is obviously not the feeling of hunger that is the proper focus of policy, because such feelings are experienced voluntarily by millions on weight reduction diets every day, and several major religions prescribe fasting and abstinence from particular foods during appropriate holy seasons. It is the association of hunger and poverty, or the involuntary experience of prolonged hunger which leads to malnutrition, that should be of concern.

Indeed, the "hunger issue" is simply shorthand for the "poverty issue," revived by activists who perceive that there is flagging political support for the war on poverty, and who use the emotionally more powerful fear of hunger to rally support for increased government spending for the poor. In a well-researched article in the New York Times Magazine, staff writer Joseph Lelyveld remarked: "Often when I left the homes of people who had experienced food emergencies, I found myself reflecting that hunger was not really their central problem. It was the whole poverty cycle.... It seemed...hunger was singled out as an issue by advocates for the poor...[as] the social issue of last resort." When Lelyveld suggested as much to Dr. Larry Brown, the hunger alarmist who suggests America is experiencing a "hunger epidemic," Brown replied, "I acknowledge that and don't feel badly about it."[1]

So the relevant policy questions are: What is the extent of malnutrition and health-threatening involuntary hunger in the U.S.? To what degree is such insufficient nutrition a function of income? What is the government doing to alleviate such hunger and what more could it be doing? What are the limits of government intervention in terms of improving the nutrition of the poor?

Nutrition and Income

A 1977 government report on the status of children noted that "...adequacy of nutrition in the United States is not primarily a problem of low income; true malnutrition is virtually nonexistent in this country. However, poor nutrition and poor nutritional habits are found in all income groups, and, over the years, have become perhaps typical for most segments of our society." The report also cited a study prepared by the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, headed by Senator George McGovern, which suggested that rising incomes could actually worsen diets by "...permitting [an unhealthy] movement away from diets high in greens, beans, and whole grains, which had been enforced by economics," to increased consumption of sugars and fats. After reviewing federal food assistance programs, the report concluded that "...good nutrition and diet are ultimately a family matter," dependent on family choice.[2]

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[1] Joseph Lelyveld, "Hunger in America, The Safety Net Has Shrunk But It's Still in Place," New York Times Magazine, p. 59.

This conclusion was confirmed by an independent analysis of data from the federal Ten State Nutrition Survey conducted in 1968-70 (before massive federal invovement in food programs, remember). Economists Dov Chernichovsky and Douglas Coate looked specifically at the effect of diet on children's growth in low-income households, and came to the conclusion that whatever else such families might have sacrificed, they generally provided adequate amounts of protein and calories for their children, based on indicators of physical growth. Moreover, they found no significant statistical relationship between income and food intake. "The finding of adequate or better than adequate protein and calorie intakes among a low-income sample of the U.S. population is not an isolated one," they wrote, and suggested that known inadequacies in iron, vitamin A and vitamin C in low-income children might be more the result of lack of nutritional information than income.[3] In fact, low-income households generally provided far more than recommended levels of protein to their children even though it is a relatively high-priced nutrient.

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[2] U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, The Status of Children, 1977, 1978, pp. 89-91.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture

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[3] Dov Chernichovsky and Douglas Coate, "The choice of diet for young children and its relation to children's growth," Journal of Human Resources 15, Spring 1980, pp. 255-263.

(USDA) has conducted dietary surveys for decades, the Household Food Consumption Survey. In 1955, USDA found that 75 percent of the poor had adequate diets. The 1965 survey showed a worsening situation, with only 64 percent of the poor with good or adequate diets, despite increases in public assistance enrollments and an increase in federal food assistance programs. Again, this reflected the deteriorating dietary habits of Americans in general, especially the decreased consumption of milk products, fruits and vegetables, not the fact that the poor could not buy food.[4] Both these and subsequent USDA surveys show that even though more poor people are likely to have poor diets than higher income groups, poor nutrition is not simply a function of income and most of the poor are able to feed themselves adequately.

USDA maintains that "diets of individuals are as good or better nutritionally now than in 1977."[5] Indeed, in some respects there are indications that diets are improving. A national sampling of women in 1985 showed higher food energy and nutrient intake than a similar sampling in 1977. Nutrient shortages noted for low-income women (e.g., zinc, magnesium, calcium) were also noted for high-income women.[6] A comparison of the nutritional status of preschool children in an urban poverty area showed nutritional improvement over the period 1977-1983, in spite of the fact that family incomes declined over the same period.[7]

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[4] See James Bovard, "Feeding Everybody, How Federal Food Programs Grew and Grew," Policy Review 26, Fall 1983, pp. 42-51.

The Myth of Worsening Hunger

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[5] USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary, Food and Conusmer Services, Memorandum "USDA Monitors Dietary Status of Americans."

[6] Ibid.

[7] Paul Zee, MD, PhD, Marina DeLeon, MD, Paula Roberson, PhD, Chen-Hsin Chen, PhD, "Nutritional Improvement of Poor Urban Preschool Children, A 1983-1977 Comparison," Journal of the American Medical Association, June 14, 1985, Vol. 253, No. 22, pp. 3269-3272.

Yet hunger has become a major issue in recent years, and hunger and homelessness have become newly discovered causes. The self-appointed Physician Task Force on Hunger in America maintains that "...the problem of hunger in the United States is now more widespread and serious than at any time in the last ten to fifteen years" and, despite annual federal expenditures of $18.6 billion on food programs alone, hunger is directly "the result of federal government policies."[8] The United States Conference of Mayors claims that "the problem of hunger...has continued to grow," and that in many cities "emergency food facilities are unable to meet the demand" because of "inadequate supplies of food."[9] These conclusions, too, are allegedly supported by "studies," but they are generally not serious studies adhering to scientific standards.

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8. Hunger in America, The Growing Epidemic, Harvard University, School of Public Health, 1985, pp. xiii and 5.

9. Task Force on Joblessness and Hunger, Mayor Raymond L. Flynn, Chairman, "The Status of Hunger in Cities," April, 1985.

Rather, they are written specifically for political impact. It can easily be shown that their methodology is shaky and their conclusions not supported by the data.

For example, the Physician Task Force's Hunger in America, published by the Harvard University School of Public Health in 1985, made the sensational announcement that there were at least 20 million hungry in America, who did not have sufficient income to buy an adequate diet. The clear implication in the study was that these "hunger findings" were based on the field work of the physicians on the task force, many of whom had participated in a similar field study in the late 1970s, but the field work was entirely independent of how they derived the number.

Dr. Larry Brown, principal author and guiding spirit of the report, simply subtracted food stamp recipients from the total poverty population in 1983 and added to that an arbitrary number of recipients. This was done on the dubious and certainly unproven assumption that anyone below the official poverty line not on food stamps is automatically hungry and the food stamp allotment itself is inadequate, so even many receiving them must be hungry. This is not only shoddy scholarship, it is dishonest. Applying exactly the same methodology to 1979, for example, results in the "finding" that 18 million were hungry that year.[10] Yet the report contrasts the early 1980s with the late 1970s, noting that the 1977 field team "had reason to believe that the hunger problem had virtually been eliminated; they took professional pleasure in our nation's having eradicated this dreadful problem."[11]

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[10] See S. Anna Kondratas, "Is there a hunger epidemic?", The Washington Times, April 17, 1985.

[11] Hunger in America, p. 1.

Surely the physicians would have noticed 18 million "hungry" people! If they weren't there then, they're not there now.

In short, Hunger in America includes a good dose of ultra-liberal political philosophy and statistical and economic nonsense. The doctors rail against inhumane bureaucracies, analyze trends in unemployment and poverty, draw analogies between today's economic conditions and the Great Depression and make frequent references to the "mean-spirited" political climate created by the Reagan Administration. But they do not establish any cause-and-effect relationships between present economic policies and trends and their supposed subject of study -- hunger and malnutrition. Moreover, even their anecdotal field "evidence" is more journalistic than scientific. And since no one denies that there are desperately poor people in the U.S., many of whom are chronically undernourished, the physicians' report adds nothing but pathos to the policy discussion.

The Task Force's subsequent effort,

Hunger Counties 1986,[12] was equally contrived, purporting to determine where in America hunger was most prevalent. Again, medical diagnosis was derived from economic data, and meaninglessly correlated economic data at that. Again, the media jumped at the idea that a Harvard research report identified the hungriest counties in America -- until reporters who went to some of these counties were greeted by local incredulity and remarks like, "these Eastern academics simply don't know what they are talking about."[13] Other critiques followed.[14] Most damning of all, a review by the nonpartisan General Accounting Office of the study's

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12. Physician Task Force on Hunger in America, Hunger Counties 1986, The Distribution of America's High-Risk Areas, Harvard University School of Public Health, January, 1986.

13. Cited in Carol J. Hornby, "Hunger," Republican Study Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, March 18, 1986.

14. See, for example, Warren Brookes," Urban Institute Study Debunks Harvard's "Hunger-Hype," Heritage Features Syndicate, February, 6, 1986.

methodology came to the conclusion that "the study's overall methodological limitations are such as to cast general doubt on the study's results.... these methodological issues severely damage the credibility of the results of Hunger Counties 1986."[15]

Other studies purportedly documenting hunger in America today suffer from similar limitations. A one-year, 146-page report on the nutritional status of the rural poor, Rising Poverty, Declining Health,[16] for example, claims their research indicates "ongoing deterioration of the nutritional status of the rural poor as well as growing gaps between their status and that of the rest of the nation." Moreover, "federal aid to rural Americans is shrinking. The result is a state of severely compromised

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15. U.S. General Accounting Office, Hunger Counties, Methodological Review of a Report by the Physician Task Force on Hunger, March, 1986, GAO/PEMD-86-7BR.

16. Jeffrey Shotland, Rising Poverty, Declining Health: the Nutritional Status of the Rural Poor, A Report by Public Voice for Food and Health Policy, Washington, D.C., February, 1986.

nutritional status in rural America that grows worse daily."[17] But they use poverty data from 1983 and nutritional data from the Second National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES II), conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics from 1976 through 1980! Moreover, they use the term rural interchangeably with the Census Bureau's category of "nonmetropolitan," which includes many towns with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants, and urban with "metropolitan," which includes many suburbs, towns and even rural areas. To show how relatively bad off the "rural" poor are, numbers of the nonmetropolitan poor are compared with numbers in the central cities only, not the whole metropolitan area, showing more "rural" poor. But poverty rates are compared for nonmetropolitan and entire metropolitan areas, showing higher "rural" rates. (The central city poverty rate, of course, is much higher than the nonmetropolitan rate.) Nonpoor in this study is arbitrarily defined as "all those living in households with incomes of at least two times the poverty threshold," so how valid are the poor-nonpoor nutritional comparisons? Live birth, infant mortality and low birthweight data were analyzed by poor county rather than the income status of individual families, so the data base is different than for the nutritional analyses. Nutrition is just one factor affecting infant mortality and low birthweight, of course, but even granting that these data could tell us something about the nutritional status of the rural poor, the data base covers different years than the NHANES II! And so on. While the author acknowledges many of these methodological shortcomings, they do not deter him from drawing ironclad conclusions about the "worsening nutritional health" of the rural poor. But by and large, the conclusions cannot be supported by the data presented.

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[17] Ibid., pp. III and 1.

There is another type of advocacy piece, exemplified by the United States Conference of Mayors report, "The Status of Hunger in

Cities," (April, 1985). According to this "study," hunger in cities is continuing to increase alarmingly in spite of the economic recovery. How do the mayors know? They conducted a survey -- of food program directors in the mayors' offices! And the only solution, of course, is expansion of federal food programs. Even granting that the individuals surveyed are knowledgeable about the situation in their cities and could put self-interest entirely aside, the survey instrument used is so flawed as to provide basically useless data which certainly do not support the sweeping conclusions the mayors made.

For example, the report tells us that 70 percent of the recipients of emergency food assistance, on average, are families and children and 30 percent single individuals. But families are far more likely to receive help from food pantries on an occasional basis and individuals are far more likely to be the "regulars" at soup kitchens on a daily basis, thus the overall incidence figure tells us nothing about the relative consumption needs of these two groups or what the composition of the recipient population is on any given day, which is necessary for anyone to plan food delivery on a day-to-day basis. Likewise, the report presumes that an increase in emergency food assistance facilities is synonymous with rising hunger. But that fact alone is equally consistent with the interpretation that there is less hunger, if one assumes that previously hungry people now have access to food they did not formerly have. The percent of need that goes unmet cannot be derived from turnaway data, which is why many cities did not even attempt to answer that question. If a turnaway goes to another pantry or soup kitchen and gets food, his need is not "unmet" and he is, in effect, double-counted in gauging demand as the mayors measured it.

Sometimes the self-interest of local officials and groups pleading on behalf of "the hungry" is even more transparent. In a New York Times story describing how one such group assailed New York City school officials for "discouraging" students from participating in school meal programs by placing in their way "obstacles such as limited access to lunchrooms and a lack of publicity about the programs," the author of the group's report was quoted explaining: "That $50 million [in potential federal reimbursements if all eligible students participated] translates into food that is not bought locally and jobs that are not there for local residents. As such, it is a loss to the city's economy."[18] In other words, the students' nutritional needs are not the crucial factor, and it doesn't matter if they don't really need what they're eligible for, the purpose of federal food programs is apparently to prop up ailing city economies.

There are literally dozens of such studies as these, and since the media rarely are able to distinguish between serious work and flawed advocacy pieces, the myth of worsening hunger continues to flourish. But such studies make things very difficult for conscientious policymakers, and ironically, they may eventually discredit sincere and honest advocates of the poor and make addressing the real problems of the poor more difficult.

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[18] Larry Rohter, "Students Spurn Meal Programs, Group Asserts," New York Times, March 7, 1986.

The Federal Role

The second part of the hunger myth asserts that it is changes in federal food policy since the late 1970s that are largely responsible for the alleged but undocumented increase in hunger. An examination of the facts blows that part of the theory away as well. As noted earlier, there was wide agreement that hunger and serious malnutrition were virtually eliminated by the late 1970s. In 1981, the last budget year of the previous administration, federal spending on food programs totaled $15.6 billion. By 1984, the figure had risen to $18.6

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19. Congressional Research Service, Cash and Noncash Benefits for Persons with Limited Income: Eligibility Rules, Recipient and Expenditure Data, 1984 and 1985 editions, Vee Burke, compiler.

billion.[19] This year, over $19 billion will be spent on federal nutrition programs. The number of food stamp recipients has risen from 14.4 million in 1978 to 20.6 million in 1981 to approximately 21 million last year.

A comprehensive two-volume study by scholars at the Urban Institute, The Effects of Legislative Changes in 1981 and 1982 on the Food Stamp Program,[20], which studied month-by-month caseloads and benefit levels over a 13-year period, adjusting for economic conditions and demographic characteristics, concluded that "the legislation of 1981-82 did not have as large an impact on recipients as previously thought." Caseload reductions because of eligibility changes amounted to 250,000-500,000 at most, rather than the "millions" previously projected (budget savings were also thus much lower than anticipated). Further, "the composition of the caseload did not change as a result of the legislation," and "the average incomes of food stamp recipients were virtually unchanged over the period during which the legislation was implemented."[21] Economic analyst and syndicated columnist Warren Brookes has pointed out that the Urban Institute study "also confirmed the fact that since 1978, constant dollar benefits per household had risen 18 percent, while the actual percentage of the poverty population receiving food stamps had risen from 49 percent to 59 percent, because of greater targetting, with 95 percent now going to poverty-level, up from 83 percent in 1978."[22]

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[20] Volumes I and II, Final Report to Congress, Prepared by The Urban Institute, 2100 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037, For the Office of Analysis and Evaluation, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, May 1985.

So if one assumes that those below the poverty line are needier than those above it, the current administration's policies actually seem to be doing a more effective job at alleviating hunger than previously. Indeed, in the medical study of poor urban preschool children cited earlier, which found nutritional improvement even as family incomes declined from 1977-83, the authors attributed the improvement to federal food assistance. But even this study shows, as an editorial comment in the Journal of the AMA pointed out, that simply providing food does not prevent malnutrition, that personal nutrition practices are critical, and that "reduction of chronic hunger is not the sole responsibility of the federal government."[23]

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[21] Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 2-3 and 15.

[22] Warren T. Brookes, Op. cit.

Are Present Efforts Adequate?

Those who would expand federal food programs ever more rapidly to meet the supposed "hunger crisis" not only overestimate the amount of income-related hunger but also insist that anyone eligible for food aid (and eligibility is set well above the poverty threshold) must be hungry without it. But this latter proposition, too, is disproved by the dietary surveys which show many poor people with perfectly adequate diets. It is one thing if hungry people are denied benefits, but quite another if people choose not to participate because of their own evaluation of their needs.

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[23] Editorial comment by Effie O. Ellis, MD, JAMA, June 14, 1985, p. 3299.

There is considerable evidence that many food stamp participants do not spend all their incremental income on food in any case. In this sense, federal food programs simply increase the income of welfare recipients and replace food that people would have bought for themselves. For example, a Congressional Budget Office study found that a dollar's worth of food stamps only increased food purchases by 57 cents, and a USDA study of Supplemental Security Income recipients found each dollar of food stamp payments only increased food purchases by 14 cents.[24] The Chernichovsky and Coate study cited earlier also found indications "that the increase in real income resulting from food stamps is devoted to consumption of other goods rather than food."[25] So it would appear that alarmism about inadequate coverage is unwarranted, and policy makers should consider whether simple expansion of eligibility and benefits in present food programs will actually improve the diets of low-income Americans. The only way to guarantee everyone an adequate diet would be to provide them with the actual foodstuffs and then force recipients to eat them. This is obviously not a realistic policy choice.

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[24] Cited in James Bovard, Op. cit., p. 47.

[25] Op. cit., p.260.

Accusations also appear from time to time that the food stamp allotment itself is unrealistically low, set to enable only the wisest and most frugal shoppers to buy the necessary balanced diet. This is inaccurate. If adequate nutrition were the only consideration, it would be possible to devise far lower budgets than the Thrifty Food Plan on which the food stamp allotment is based and still provide all necessary

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26. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Human Nutrition Information Service, Consumer Nutrition Division, "The Thrifty Food Plan, 1983," Hyatsville, MD, August, 1983, p. 13.

nutrients.[26] In fact, the plan is based first of all on the actual consumption patterns of food-stamp-eligible households so as to be "least disruptive" to actual food practices. It is only modified to the extent that higher-than-necessary consumption of high-priced items like meat is reduced to provide less expensive acceptable substitutes like grain products and dry beans. It is also modified for nutritional considerations. Thus, the 1983 revision controls fat, cholesterol, caloric sweeteners, and sodium at moderate levels. The Thrifty Food Plan provides not only an adequate diet but a healthier diet than the average American seems to prefer.

The plan is also costed out on the basis of consumption patterns, reflecting prices in stores where food stamp recipients actually shop. The USDA organizes "field shopping trips" in various cities from time to time to make sure that the proper foods can be bought within the budget framework. Allowances are even made for household discard of edible food. The sample monthly food list

A sample food list for a month[1] based on the Thrifty Food Plan 1983

Potatoes	20-3/4lb
Carrots, fresh	1-3/4 lb
Tomatoes, fresh	2-3/4 lb
Cabbage, fresh	5 lb
Lettuce	4-1/4 lb
Celery, fresh	1 lb
Onions, mature, fresh	3 lb
Other vegetables, fresh	12-3/4 lb
Leafy greens, canned	3/4 lb
Tomatoes, tomato products, canned	2-1/2 lb
Snap beans, canned	3-1/2 lb
Corn, canned	4-3/4 lb
Green peas, canned	2-1/4 lb
Other vegetables, canned and dry	4-3/4 lb
Leafy greens, frozen	1/2 lb
Other vegetables, frozen	2 lb
Vegetable juices	1/2 qt
Vegetable soups	2-1/2 lb
Citrus fruit, fresh and frozen	11 lb
Apples, fresh	9 lb
Bananas, fresh	6 lb
Other fruit, fresh and frozen	2 lb
Fruit, canned and dry	3-3/4 lb
Citrus fruit juices, single strength	6-1/2 qt
Other fruit juices, single strength	1 (3/2 qt
Whole-grain/high-fiber breakfast cereals	3 lb
Other breakfast cereals	3-3/4 lb
Whole-grain/high-fiber flour, meal, rice, pasta	2-1/4 lb
Other flour, meal, rice, pasta	31-1/4 lb
Whole-grain/high-fiber bread	3-1/2 lb
Other bread	20-1/2 lb
Bakery products, mixtures mostly grain	10-3/4 lb
Milk, yogurt	51-3/4 qt
Cheese	2-3/4 lb
Cream, ice cream, other mixtures	4-3/4 lb
Lower-cost meats, variety meats	20 lb
Higher-cost meats, variety meats	4-1/2 lb
Poultry	14 lb
Fish, shellfish	1/2 lb
Bacon, sausage, luncheon meats	6-3/4 lb
Mixtures, mostly meat and alternates	1-1/4 lb
Eggs	4-2/3 doz
Dry beans	4-1/4 lb
Mature beans, canned	3-3/4 lb
Peanut butter	2-1/4 lb
Nuts (shelled weight)	1 lb
Margarine, butter	4 lb
Shortening, oil, salad dressing	6 lb
Sugar	7-3/4 lb
Other sweets	4-3/4 lb
Soft drinks, punches, ades	6-1/4 qt

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[1] Provides for the food needs for a four-person household (man and woman 20-50 and children 6-8 and 9-11 years of age). In addition to foods listed, the plan provides for small amounts of some other foods: coffee, tea, cocoa, leavening agents, and seasonings.

Source: Consumer Nutrition Division
Human Nutrition Information Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Slightly revised
November 1985

reproduced here is ample proof that those who maintain the food stamp plan is inadequate have a standard of hunger unknown anywhere else in the world. The fact that most food stamp recipients exceed the food stamp budget because of personal preferences does not mean allotments are inadequate. The purpose of food programs is to alleviate hunger and provide sufficient income for an adequate diet, not to guarantee the poor the frequently unwise food choices of the middle class.

Policy Recommendations

The preceding discussion is not intended to encourage complacency about the plight of the poor, the hungry, the homeless and other unfortunates in our society. They obviously exist, at the very least in the hundreds of thousands, and the less extreme but still penurious cases, in the millions. But the problem is not new. We have simply not yet learned how to solve it, assuming that government has the power to solve all human problems. The wild claims that hunger is escalating rapidly and that recent government policies have contributed to this trend, however, simply defies logic, common sense, and the facts. But there is no doubt that the subjective impression that this is so has colored the public policy debate, to the detriment of those who really need help and the public at large.

Thus the federal government should give serious consideration to developing annual health and nutrition surveys to produce reliable and current estimates of the nutritional status of all Americans as well as of the poor. This would help identify both the scope of the problem and at-risk groups, as well as changes over time. There is currently no methodology to estimate the prevalence of hunger and malnutrition in the U.S. and both health and welfare policy makers would benefit from access to such information. The Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council is currently evaluating the possibility of developing such methodologies and studying ways to improve the major food consumption and pertinent health surveys. These efforts should be encouraged and given high priority.

Second, policy makers should continue pursuing more effective allocation of benefits to those most in need, and to needy people who are not now categorically eligible. For example, in their January, 1984 report, the President's Task Force on Food Assistance suggested raising asset limits for food stamp eligibility on the grounds that the assets of many newly unemployed and needy households are not readily marketable or selling them off may constitute an insupportable drain on the household's resources. Also, the Task Force suggested a nutrition block grant so states could use more discretion in allocating funds among the different federal nutrition programs based on their own needs and economic conditions. In the absence of consensus on the direction of a fundamental reform of the welfare system, such incremental changes in nutrition programs to improve local and state flexibility and reach neglected at-risk groups would be a step in the right direction.

While private-sector food assistance to the poor is beyond the scope of this paper, the private sector has been playing and should continue to play a fundamental role in food assistance to the needy. This is not a sign of deficiencies in the governmental safety net, but a sign of the strength of our society. There are some things the private sector does better than government. The federal government should evaluate and continue to develop better coordination of public-private delivery networks.

Conclusion

The problem of hunger in America has been vastly exaggerated in recent years. While there is no credible methodology for determining its exact extent, careful study of health, nutrition and food consumption surveys, as well as an analysis of recipient data, benefit levels and budget outlays, indicate that there has been no major change in the nutritional status of Americans in recent years. There is absolutely no factual evidence of widespread hunger or famine in the United States. Policy makers must continue to address the overall problem of poverty and economic opportunity in the United States, of which hunger is only one manifestation, recognizing that the problem is not primarily one of federal funding.

QUESTIONS FOR ANNA KONDRATAS FROM SENATOR CHARLES E. GRASSLEY:

1. YOU HAVE BEEN VERY CRITICAL OF THE FINDINGS AND METHODS OF SOME OF THE RECENT STUDIES OF HUNGER IN THE UNITED STATES. HAS THERE BEEN TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE ANY RECENT METHODOLOGICALLY ADEQUATE STUDY OF HUNGER IN THE UNITED STATES? AND, IF SO, WHAT WERE ITS CONCLUSIONS?

   WOULD IT BE FAIR TO SAY THAT YOUR POSITION IS THAT WE JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT THE EXTENT OF SERIOUS, HEALTH THREATENING, HUNGER IN THE UNITED STATES IS?

2. IN THE STUDY BY THE PHYSICIAN TASK FORCE TITLED HUNGER COUNTIES 1986, TWO IOWA COUNTIES WERE IDENTIFIED AS BEING AMONG THE 150 COUNTIES WITH THE WORST HUNGER IN THE UNITED STATES.

   I GATHER YOU WOULD ARGUE THAT THIS STUDY'S FINDINGS ARE JUST NOT BELIEVABLE?

3. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY RECENT ANALYSES WHICH DO GIVE US ANY RELIABLE DATA AND CONCLUSIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE PREVALENCE OF RURAL HUNGER NATIONALLY?

Responses to Sen. Grassley's questions:

1. There have been no such national studies recently, to my knowledge, because both the available data and methodologies have serious limitations. We must work to improve them. There are, however, perfectly adequate limited studies which enable us to draw some limited conclusions. I mention several such studies in my written testimony, such as the Urban Institute study on the food stamp program and the Chernichovsky and Coate study on the nutritional status of poor children. Yes, I think my position is that we are unable at present to determine the exact extent of hunger or its trend. This is also the conclusion reached by the President's Task Force on Food Assistance.

2. The General Accounting Office concurred in my opinion of that so-called study. Its methodology is so flawed that its conclusions are totally insupportable. It's a fraud. If any of its "findings" have any relationship to reality, it is purely coincidental.

3. Not to my knowledge, but I would like to add that both my subjective impressions from very limited field work, as well as from discussions with people knowledgeable about rural conditions, suggest to me that in some areas, at least, rural hunger is a more serious problem than urban hunger. We ought not to neglect the rural poor simply because they are less visible.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Let me turn to you, Dr. Gershoff. In the press and in general, we equate malnutrition with hunger. As a professional how do you differentiate between the two? For instance, can a person be hungry but not malnourished? We talk a lot about the consequences of malnutrition but is it appropriate to assume that the consequences of hunger is the same as the consequences of malnutrition?

Dr. GERSHOFF. It seems to me that one of the great difficulties that we often have and particularly in advocacy type of hearings is in definitions. I would just as soon use the word malnutrition as hunger. I think that we have been kind of brainwashed by pictures of children in refugee camps in Ethiopia and other parts of the world. I define malnutrition and have for many years, in a variety of ways. None of us would disagree with the statement that the child with rickets, beri-beri or ella is severely malnourished. We do not have many of these cases in the United States. What we have in the United States and it is not difficult to find are people who regularly for reasons beyond their control have to go without adequate amount of food.

We also find people who are forced to consume diets which most of us would not accept although sometimes these diets may have adequate amounts of nutrients. For example, I have talked to many people who have consumed pet foods and if you could get the garbage of the Ritz you probably could put together a pretty good diet as far as nutritients are concerned, but it seems to me that in the United States, eating garbage is just not acceptable.

Thus oftentimes when I talk about malnutrition, I am talking about these kinds of conditions.

Now, we are finding people who are just not getting enough to eat. At anytime we also find people who get food in bursts. For example, some years ago, we discovered to our horror within 5 minutes of where I was working that large numbers of children went to school without breakfast, and we had no school lunch program. These children received large meals in the afternoon, and in the evening. They would not show the symptoms of malnutrition that are described in medical textbooks, but every day, they sat in class hungry. To me that is a form of malnutrition.

The CHAIRMAN. That's very good.

Dr. Gershoff, there are some studies that show that there is no correlation between income level and nutritional status in this country. For example, women from families with high incomes sometimes suffer from the same nutrient problems or deficiencies such as iron, zinc, magnesium, and calcium deficiencies, as women below the poverty line. There are also studies that show little if any correlation exists between income levels and nutritional disease in children exist as well. Considering that information do we need to invest more resources into our current Federal food programs or is it time that we started investing some of these resources into educational programs as well?

Dr. GERSHOFF. Well, as an educator, of course, you are not going to get a disagreement from me but I do think that what you said is probably only partially true. There are, unfortunately, wealthy people who eat very poorly. We are having an epidemic right now, it seems to me, of eating disorders. We have middle-class American kids, mostly young women, who are suffering from anorexia nervosa and bulemia, who are having a very difficult time. I think, however, that when we look at poor people we see a different kind of situation.

Even as we may have some difficulties in defining what malnutrition or hunger is, there are different levels of poverty.

If you start out with people who have no income, you can almost assume that they are going to have to give up things like food and a variety of other necessities. As they obtain income or the means to acquire resources, things start changing and much depends as has been stated on their priorities. We find in our experience that older people are more likely to pay their bills, to spend their money on rent and utilities, and food is secondary, while in some cases, younger people are more likely to let them turn off the gas, not pay their rent and spend their money on food or other things.

[Response of Dr. Gershoff to question submitted by Senator Grassley follows:]

QUESTIONS FOR DR. GERSHOFF FROM SENATOR CHARLES E. GRASSLEY.

1. I HAVE LEARNED THAT A GREATER PROPORTION OF THE POVERTY POPULATION IS RECEIVING FOOD STAMPS THAN EVER BEFORE, YET SOME CLAIM THAT HUNGER IN AMERICA IS INCREASING. IS THERE ANY CORRELATION BETWEEN THE AMOUNT WE SPEND ON FOOD STAMPS AND HUNGER?

The reason that the claim is being made that hunger in America is increasing is that a smaller percent of the poverty population is receiving food stamps than a few years ago. The numbers which I have seen are that in 1980 68% of those in poverty received food stamps while in 1985 it had dropped to 59%.

I am sure that there is a correlation between the amount we spend on food stamps and hunger. However, the effect of food stamps on food consumption may not be as great as some might expect. Poor people require many things. If they are given food stamps they are likely to spend less of their other resources on food. Similarly, if they have rent or medical subsidies they will spend more money on food. Eventually, we probably should develop an income maintenance as has been suggested by many people including President Nixon.

The **Chairman**. Ms. Parker, let me ask you, in the various research studies you cite in your testimony, do the researches define and measure the issue of hunger the same way?

And if not, how do they differ?

Ms. **Parker**. They measure hunger in different ways. The Utah study, which was done under the auspices of the department of health, looked at really three different things. One, they looked at people's perceptions of whether they were getting enough food and had enough income, and looked at issues such as whether meals were being skipped. These are more indirect measures. They also looked at heights and weights of children, and finally they looked at the dietary intake of the individuals in the survey.

Now, the East Harlem study or rather the study that was done in East Harlem, Bronx, and Brooklyn, looked at families who were coming in for emergency food, a very different kind of study than one in Utah, which looked at a randomly selected group of individuals in a low-income area.

In the New York City study they looked at the same kinds of indirect measures, such as how many people were going without food, for how many days, before they came in to get food at an emergency food site.

The **Chairman**. At this point we will put that Utah study into the record; this is an interesting study, both in its findings and the methodology used.

[The study referred to follows:]

UTAH NUTRITION MONITORING PROJECT

STUDY OF LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS UTAH, 1985

Utahns Against Hunger
and
Utah Department of Health
Division of Family Health Services

May 1986

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study is the result of a collaborative effort of many people. The majority of the work was done by G. Ted Fairchild and Kelly D. Byrnes of TK Associates. They in conjunction with Sharon Ernst of the Utah Department of Health, Family Health Services Division are responsible for this report. Nevertheless, without the work and dedication of the following individuals this project would have been impossible. Barbara McKillop and Brent Searle were the principle interviewers and assisted in the data analysis. Tim Chou, Tricia Ormsby and Pam Jackson also assisted in data collection. Dr. Larry Stucki provided invaluable assistance in the selection of the sample. Lucy Cannon assisted in the production of computer output reports and data interpretation. The dietary analysis would have been impossible without the cooperation of the NDDA Laboratory at Southern Illinois University, and especially Dr. Jan Endres. Thanks to Anne Rowley for invaluable assistance with final editorial changes. And a special tribute to Dr. Peter C. van Dyckwhose support made this study possible.

UTAH NUTRITION MONITORING PROJECT

Study of Low Income Households in Utah

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UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION

STUDY OF LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS IN UTAH

by
G. Ted Fairchild, R.D., M.P.H., and Sharon L. Ernst, R.D.

Interest in the area of domestic hunger has stimulated a number of studies around the United States with the purpose of describing the nature and extent of the problem. Similar interest in Utah was the catalyst to initiate this project. This study is unique in that it is one of the few studies which attempts to look objectively at the problem. The majority of "hunger" studies that have been conducted are based on interviews at gathering sites of people in obvious need, or a compilation of data from assistance programs. This study is based on a random distribution of low income people from across the state of Utah, and attempts to describe the population, present a perspective from their point of view, and assess the current nutrition and health status of the population who participated in the study.

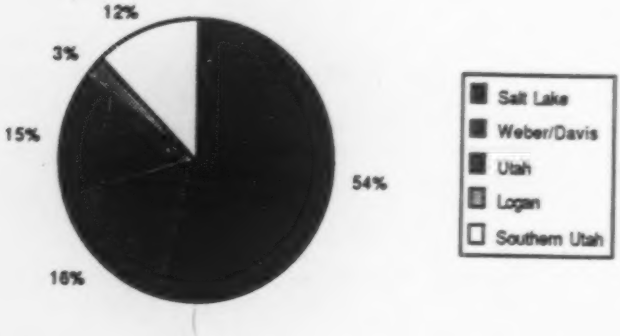
The purpose of the project was to determine the nutrition and health status of low income people in Utah. Information was also obtained from the people surveyed regarding use of existing food and income assistance programs, length of participation in these programs and reasons for not using such programs.

Between June 20 and September 15, 1985, a survey was conducted on 1020 families in Utah whose income was below 185% of the 1985 poverty guidelines (which was $410 per person, or $1642 per month for a family of four). The sample was randomly selected from 1980 census data by census block areas. If the household selected did not meet the income criteria, a replacement household in the same block area was interviewed. A 36 item questionnaire which contained information on demographics, socioeconomic status, as well as use of existing income and food assistance programs was used as the data collection instrument. In addition a dietary history form which included anthropometric data was administered to the households. Because of the nature of the survey methodology, it is important to understand that the study is not necessarily representative of all low income households in Utah. The sample size, however, is adequate to make some general conclusions.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE POPULATION

Geographic Distribution. The sample roughly represents the geographic population distribution of the state. More than half of the sample (54%), or 536 households, were from the Salt Lake area, from North Salt Lake to the Utah County line. One hundred fifty-eight, or 16% of the sample, were from the Weber-Davis County areas, from Bountiful to Brigham City. An additional 15%, or 143 households, were from the Utah County area. There were 25 households or 3% of the sample from the Cache County-Logan Area. Finally, 107 households, or 12% of the sample, were from rural Utah, described in this paper as Southern Utah because the majority were from the central and southern part of the state(Figure 1).

Figure 1. DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE BY
GEOGRAPHIC AREA
UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY, 1985 N=1003



Ethnic Distribution. The ethnic distribution of the sample was as follows: White,77.4%,which is 734 households; Black, 37 households or 3.9% of the sample; the 99 Hispanic families accounted for 10.4% of the sample; there were 54 Asian-Pacific households interviewed which is 5.7% of the sample; and the remaining 2.5% or 24 families declared themselves to be Native Americans (Figure 2).

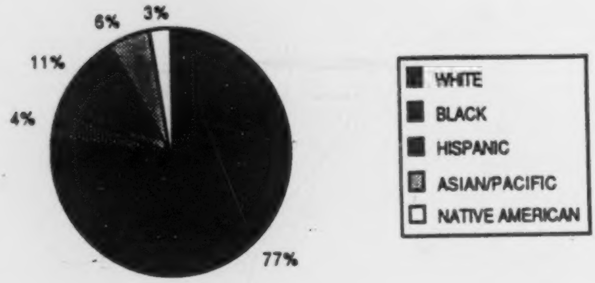
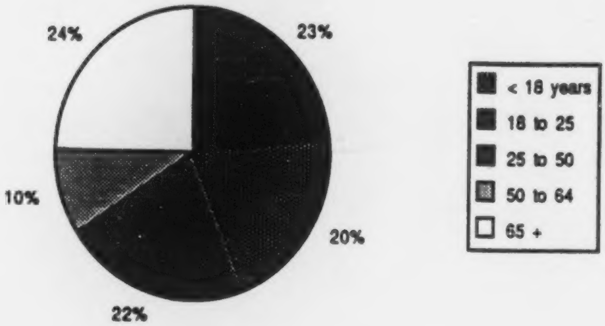


Figure 2. DISTRIBUTION OF THE
SAMPLE BY ETHNIC ORIGIN
UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY,1985.
N= 1003

Distribution of the Sample by Age. The data is also described by age categories. The groupings were done according to the age of the person on which the diet history was taken. For example, if a diet history was done on a child younger than 18 then the family data is included in that category. The rest of the sample reflects the actual age of the respondent, as recorded on both the questionnaire and on the diet history form. This is particularly important to understand in order to comprehend interpretations of the data on utilization of food and income assistance programs.

In approximately 23% (N=184) of the households, the person on whom the diet information was recorded was less than 18 years old. This essentially means that households with small children are in this age category. Twenty percent,(N=151)were 18-25 years old, 22% (N=173) were 15 to 50, 10% (N=82)were between 50 and 64 years of age, and 24% (N=192)were over 65 years old (Figure 3).

Figure 3. DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE BY AGE OF RESPONDENTS UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY,1985. N=1003



There were 578 females and 425 males who were the primary responders to the questionnaire. The average household had 3.25 members. There were 215 or approximately 21% of the sample who were single heads of household.

Distribution of the Sample by Per Capita Income (Quartiles). - The sample was divided into monthly per capita income (PCI) quartiles. Monthly income from the households was divided by the total number of individuals in the household to give per capita income figures. The data were divided into four groups of equal size: Group 1= PCI less than $230 per month; Group 2= $230 to $321; Group 3= $322 to $440; and Group 4= more than $440 per month. The relative poverty of the sample can thus be assessed by comparing it to poverty guidelines. For example, for a household of 1 person, the monthly income level to be considered at poverty is 438 dollars. The level of qualification for Food Stamps is 130% of the poverty level, which for a single individual is 569 dollars per month. For a single member household to be eligible for programs such as the Supplemental Feeding Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC), the criteria is 185% of the poverty level, which is 810 dollars per month. These same criteria for a family of 4 are as follows: the per capita poverty level is 222 dollars per month, 130% of the poverty level is 288 dollars per month, and 185% of the poverty level is 410 dollars per month (Federal Register March 28, 1985).

RESULTS

The results of this study are reported in the following discussion. Results are divided into several sections.

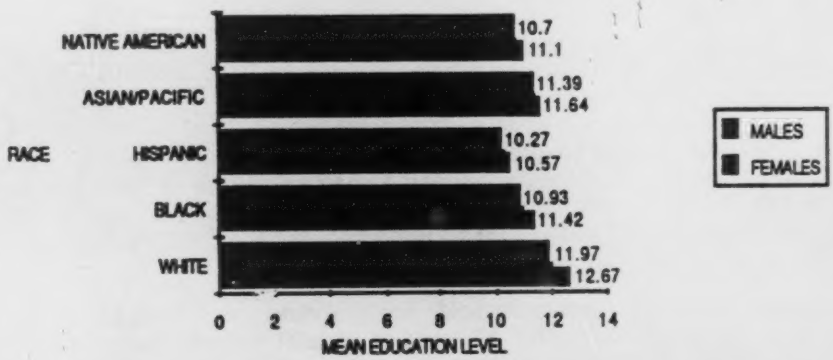
SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Levels of Education. The number of years that the heads of household had attended formal classes was recorded.

Among the most interesting of the findings is that only 73 percent of male persons interviewed had graduated from high school. Twenty percent had 10 years or less of schooling. The average number of years of school is 12.4 for low-income males in the study.

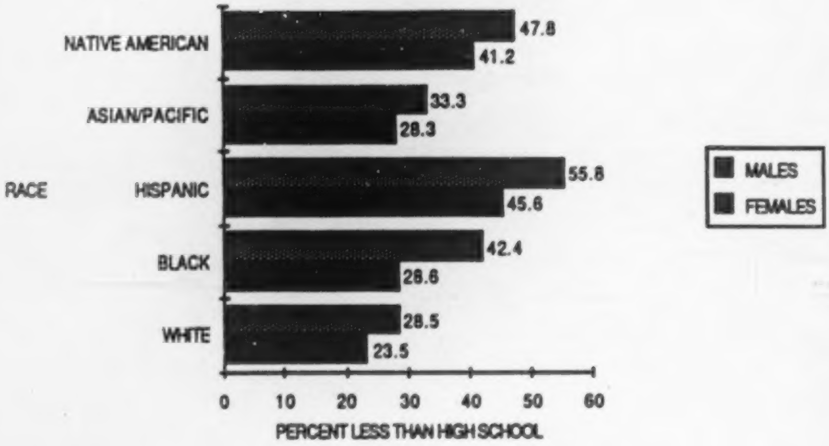
Female educational status is of even more concern. Thirty-one percent of the respondents had less than a high school education. The average years of schooling for females in the study is 11.7 . Less than 6 percent of the female heads of households have the equivalent of a four-year college education, while over 14 percent of the men have four or more years of higher education.

Figure 4. AVERAGE EDUCATION LEVEL OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD BY RACE AND GENDER UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY, 1985



There were differences in the average education levels between ethnic groups. Hispanics had the lowest average education level. More than half of the Hispanic women had less than a high school education compared to about a third of the white women (Figure 5).

Figure 5. PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS WITH LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION BY RACE AND GENDER
UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY, 1985. N=1003



ECONOMIC STATUS

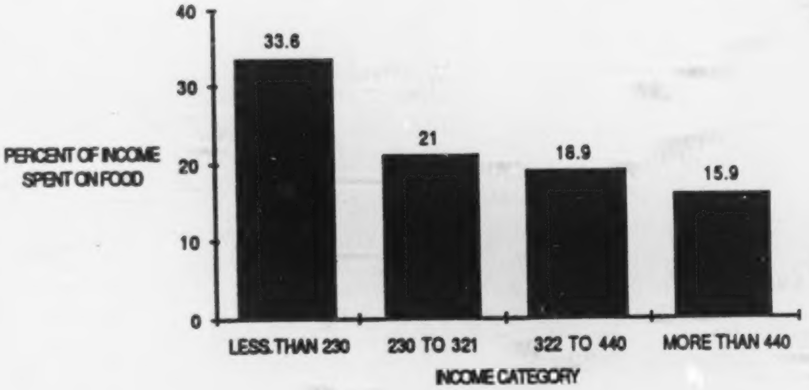
Average monthly income for the low-income households in this study was $944 per month. There were an average of 3.25 persons per household for a per capita income of $291 per month.

National median (average) family income is $281 per week. Among Utah's low-income households, we find a median income of $238 per week, 15% less than the national average. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1985 (105th Edition.) Washington, DC, 1984. p. xxi.)

Food Expenditures. Utah households are spending about $193.82 per month on food stuffs, approximately 22 percent of total income, compared to 19 percent monthly average spent nationally on food. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1985 (105th Edition.) Washington, DC, 1984. p. 481.) Food expenditures for low-income households range from $7 to $700 per month, averaging $59.64 per person per month. This is significantly lower than the national average of $111 per person per month. In fact, the minimal cost of a "basket of food" adequate to feed an adult is about $21 per week, or $84 per month; and about $17 per week is required to properly nourish a growing child--$68 per month. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1985 (105th Edition.) Washington, DC, 1984. p. 480.)

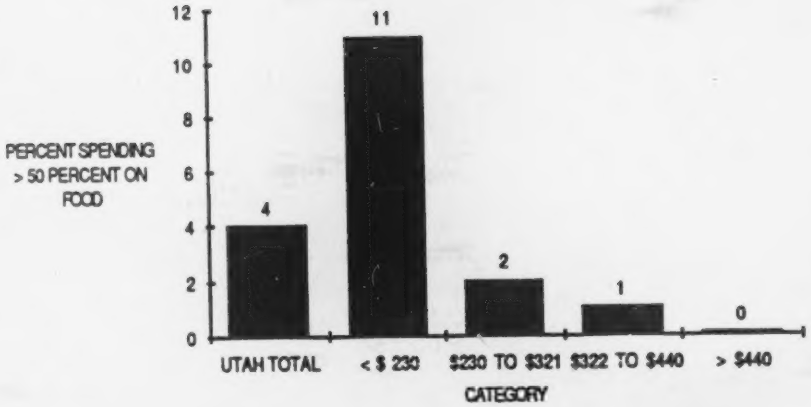
In this study there were not large differences in the percent of income spent on food between the various ethnic groups. There are, however, more important differences between the income levels. The lowest income group spent almost twice as large a percentage of their income on food as did the highest income group (Figure 7).

Figure 7. PERCENT OF INCOME SPENT ON FOOD BY PER CAPITA INCOME LEVELS, UTAH LOW INCOME SURVEY, 1985



Of even greater significance is the fact that 11 % of the poorest group are spending more than 50% of their income on food. This is important because it is generally accepted that, if a household is spending more than half of its income on food, it is likely that its individual members are not able to meet their nutrient needs (Figure 8).

Figure 8. PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS SPENDING MORE THAN 50% OF THEIR INCOME ON FOOD BY PER CAPITA INCOME LEVELS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, UTAH LOW INCOME SURVEY, 1985



Food Storage. Households were asked to indicate how many days they could eat with the food that they had in the home at the time of the interview. The average number of days that was given was almost a month, 27 days. Half of the familes (49%), however, indicated that they had a week or less of food available. Three-fourths (75%) had less than a two week supply of food. Only 11 percent of the households reported having more than a months worth of food.

Table 1.3. Number of Days Families Could Eat with the Food That They Had in Their Homes at the Time of the Interview, by Geographic Area and Per Capita Income.
Utah Low Income Study, 1985.

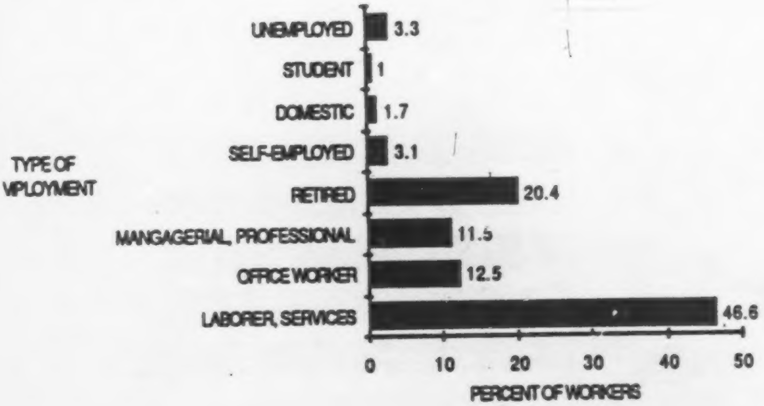
	Average Number of Days of Food	% with ≤7 days	% with ≤14 days	% with ≤30 days	% with ≥30 days
Total Sample N=1003	27.3	49	75	89	11
Geographic Area					
Salt Lake	17.5	53	80	94	6
Weber/Davis	17.1	58	84	92	8
Utah County	32.9	39	63	86	14
Logan	38.9	27	63	80	20
Southern Utah	77.3	37	53	68	32

Per Capita Income					
<$230 per month	27.3	50	75	91	9
$231 to $321	25.8	51	77	90	10
$322 to $440	28.7	48	72	86	14
>$440 per month	28.0	47	73	90	10

There are some geographic area differences in the length of time that the households could eat with stored food. The most rural of the families, those included in the Southern Utah category had an average of 77 days of food on hand. This is in contrast to the more urban households who had an average of slightly more than two weeks of food available. There were no appreciable differences between the various income categories.

Employment Families were asked about the number of people employed in the household, and the type of work that they did. Nearly 56% of the households in the study had one or more persons employed full time. Thirty-three percent had individuals who worked part-time. Only 3% of those surveyed indicated current long term unemployment. If the data on retired low-income people is removed from the rest of the data, 80% of the households had at least one person in the workforce.

Figure 9. TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT OF LOW INCOME WORKERS
UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY, 1985
N=1003



Over 45 percent of low-income workers are employed as blue-collar labor or service personnel. Another 13 percent are office workers, and 11.5 percent are in managerial positions, while 3.1 percent are self-employed. Almost 2% consider their primary employment to be domestic work. A small percent (1%) of those surveyed are student families enrolled in universities. However, because these families are usually being partially supported by parents or by other government assistance not available to the general public (grants, student loans, etc.), this population has been given little emphasis in this report. The remaining twenty (20.4) percent of the households interviewed are retired, and their income is derived from retirement benefits or Social Security.

PERCEPTIONS OF INCOME ADEQUACY

One of the questions asked of the families was whether or not they perceived their income to be adequate in meeting some basic needs. The needs identified are food, clothing, housing, transportation, medical care, education, and recreation (defined as money for leisure activities).

Nearly 38 percent of Utah low-income households surveyed indicate their income is inadequate to meet food needs of their families. Nationally, a similar survey found 20 percent of adults reporting that there were times during the past year when they did not have enough money to buy food for their families. Forty percent of the low-income Utahns surveyed said their clothing needs are not being met, compared to 26 percent of the general population indicating insufficient income for clothing. Additionally, 43 percent of Utah's low-income households are concerned about inability to afford health care for their families. Nationally, 35 percent of persons surveyed report the same concern (Gallup Poll, January and February, 1984).

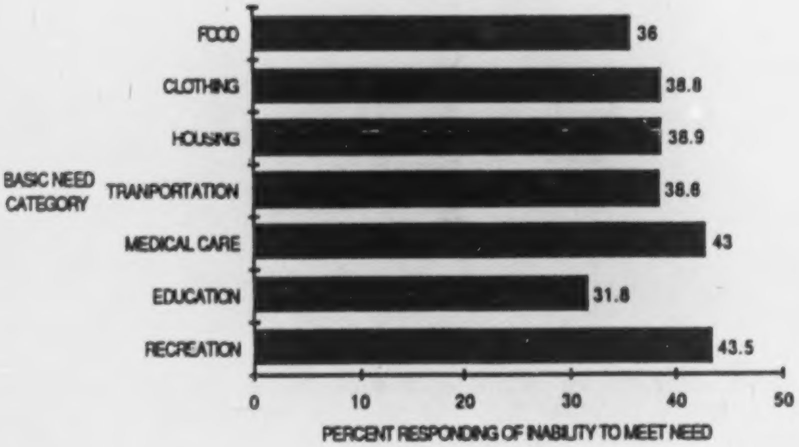
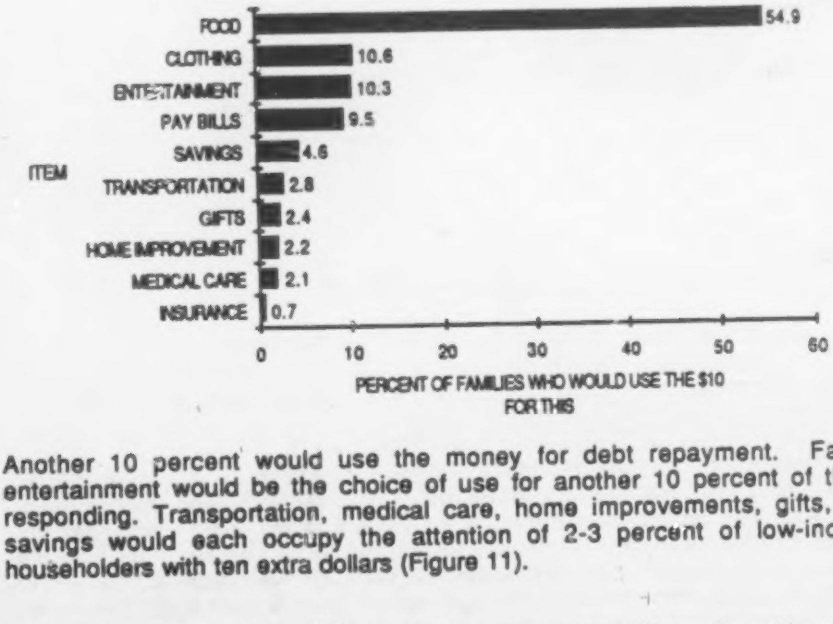


Figure 10. PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILIES INABILITY TO MEET BASIC NEEDS UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY,1985
N=1003

Forty percent of low-income households in Utah stated that housing costs (rent, utilities, upkeep) are more than they can afford. Adequate transportation is beyond the means of 39 percent of the households questioned. Desired education is unreachable for 31 percent of those desiring such, and family recreation needs are not adequately being met for 44 percent of this same population (Figure 10).

The families were asked, if they had an extra ten dollars what they do with it. An overwhelming majority (56%) of the respondents indicated that they would buy food. Eleven percent indicated they would by clothing with any extra money.

Figure 11. WHAT FAMILIES WOULD BUY WITH AN EXTRA $10
UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY,1985
N=1003

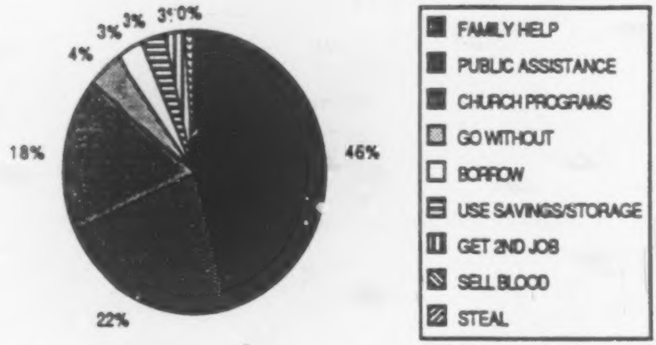


Another 10 percent would use the money for debt repayment. Family entertainment would be the choice of use for another 10 percent of those responding. Transportation, medical care, home improvements, gifts, and savings would each occupy the attention of 2-3 percent of low-income householders with ten extra dollars (Figure 11).

Where Households Go for Help. Families were asked, "If you do not have any money and need food, where do you go for help?"

When in need and out of money, most people surveyed (47%) indicated they would go to family for assistance. Over 23 percent say public assistance is their back-up resource. Various church programs provide 18.4 percent of low-income households' emergency needs. Over 4 percent of those asked stated they would simply go without food or other needs if they did not possess adequate finances themselves. Others would get a second job (2.4%), sell blood (.9%), borrow (.3%), or steal (.1%) (Figure 12).

Figure 12. RESOURCES USED BY HOUSEHOLDS WHEN IN NEED; UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY
1985, N= 1003



PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Households were asked to compare their perception of how they are doing this year as compared to the previous year. They were then asked how they felt they would be in the coming year. The following gives a condensation of the findings.

Comparing their present financial well-being to that of one year ago, 37 percent of Utah low income households questioned feel their current circumstance is worse than during the previous year. Thirty-eight percent indicate no change in their financial situation, while 25 percent state they are better off than last year at the same time (Table 1.4). Nationally, 43 percent of the people questioned indicated an improvement from a year ago. Twenty-six percent answered that there had been no measurable change, while 29 percent said they are worse off (Gallup Poll, January and February, 1984).

Table 1.4. Perceptions of Utah Low Income Households And a National Sample on Their Economic Well-Being Last Year as Compared to This Year.
Utah Low Income Study June to September 1985 (N= 1003)and Gallup Poll June 10- June 23, 1985, (N= 1017).

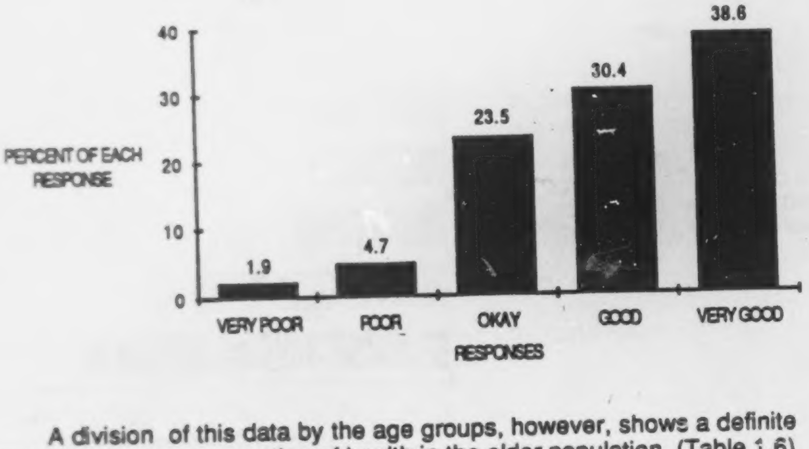
Respondent Perception	Utah's Low Income Households	National Poll
Better off	25%	43%
No change	38%	26%
Worse off	37%	29%
		(2% no opinion)

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

Families were asked what their perceptions were of their own health status. They were then asked what they felt would improve their health.

The majority(69%) of the families interviewed thought that their health was good or very good. Only 6.6 percent of the families felt that they were in poor health, and about a quarter (23.5%) felt that they were okay (Figure 13).

Figure 13. FAMILY PERCEPTION OF HEALTH STATUS
UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY, 1985
N=1003



A division of this data by the age groups, however, shows a definite trend toward poorer perception of health in the older population. (Table 1.6)

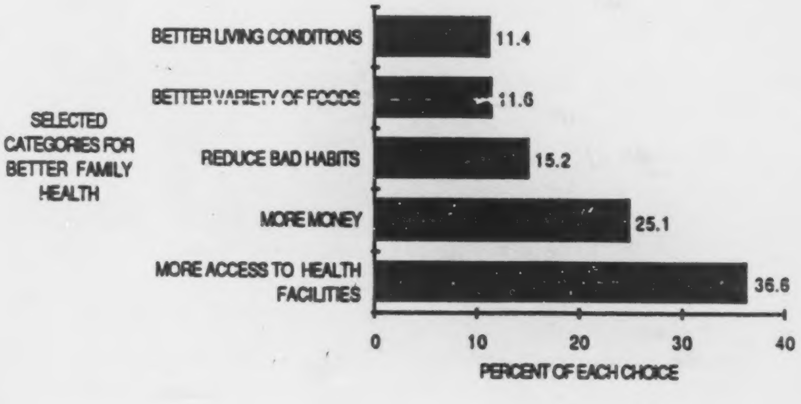
Table 1.6. Perceptions of Health Status by Age Groupings
Utah Low Income Study,1985.

	Perceptions of Health Status				
	Very Poor	Poor	Okay	Good	Very Good
Age groups					
< 18 years	0.5	0.5	16.4	34.4	48.1
18 to 25	0	0.7	14.0	34.0	51.3
25 to 50	1.8	2.3	19.3	25.1	51.5
50 to 64	6.1	9.8	28.0	29.3	26.8
65 +	3.1	13.1	39.8	26.7	17.1

Almost 10 percent (9.2) of the individuals over fifty felt that their health was very poor, as compared to only 2.3% of those under fifty who fell into this category. An additional 22.9 percent of the over fifty households felt they were in poor health as compared only 3.5 percent in the younger age groups.

The next question asked was, "What would improve the family's health?" The responses were separated into five categories (Figure 14). The most frequent response was more access to health facilities. More than a third (36.6%) of the respondents felt that access to health care would be beneficial to their health. A fourth (25.1%)of the families felt that more money would be a factor in improving the families health. The other categories mentioned were, reduction of bad habits 15.2%, better variety of food 11.6%, and better conditions in which to live 11.4%.

Figure 14. FAMILY PERCEPTION OF WHAT WOULD BETTER FAMILY HEALTH
UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY, 1985
N=1003



These data are also reported by age categories (Table 1.7). The most significant difference is again found in the older population. Access to health care was a far larger issue to them in having better health than any of the other categories. The following table shows the responses by age groupings.

Table 1.7. Perceptions of What Would Improve Families Health by Age Categories.
Utah Low Income Study, 1985.

	Categories of Responses				
	Better Living Conditions	Better Variety of Foods	Reduction of Bad Habits	More Money	More access to Health Facilities
Age groups					
< 18 years	15.8	15.8	15.1	34.9	18.4
18 to 25	5.6	14.0	10.3	26.2	43.9
25 to 50	6.8	12.7	20.3	20.3	39.8
50 to 64	21.0	6.5	12.9	21.0	38.7
65 +	13.2	10.4	15.3	16.0	45.1

TIMES HOUSEHOLDS WENT WITHOUT MEDICAL CARE OR FOOD

Families were asked to indicate how many times in the past year they had not gone to a doctor or health provider because of a lack of resources, even though they thought they should.

The following figure shows the numbers of times during a year that any member of the household had gone without medical care. The results are that almost a fourth (22.8%) fall into this high risk category. There were 80 families, 7.9% of the total, in the study who reported that they had not gone for medical care one time because of lack of resources. Fewer, 69 families or 6.8%, did without medical care twice. Twenty-nine (2.8%) reported going without care 3 times. Twelve households reported 4 and 5 times respectively. Fifteen of the households reported going without medical care from 6 to 10 times in a year, eight from 11 to 20 times and four reported doing without health care more than 20 times during the year.

Figure 15. NUMBER OF TIMES HOUSEHOLDS HAVE GONE WITHOUT MEDICAL CARE IN THE PAST YEAR BECAUSE OF LACK OF RESOURCES
UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY, 1985
N=1003

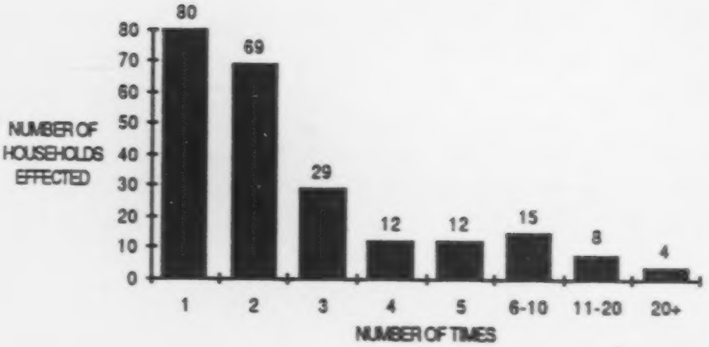
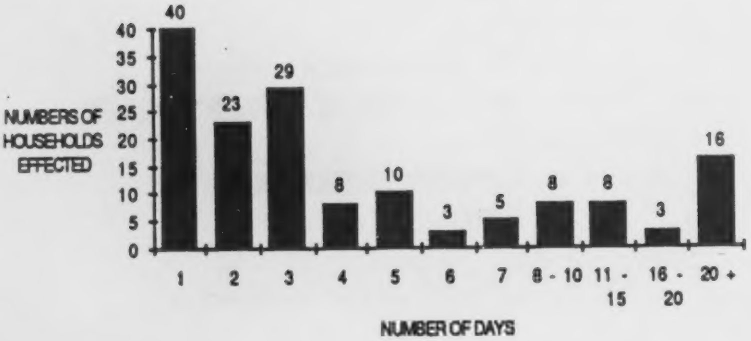


Figure 16 shows the number of days that any member of the household had gone without food because of a lack of resources. These data exclude voluntary abstention from food for religious or other reasons.

About 15 percent of households, 153 out of 1003 , had someone in them who had gone without food at least one day during the past year because of lack of resources. A quarter of these 26.1% had not eaten for 1 day. An additional 15% reported 2 days, and 19% 3 days. Fewer, 8 (5.2%), 10 (6.5%), 3 (2%), 5 (3.4%), and 8 (5.2%) reported 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 to 10 days respectively. An additional 5.2% (8) reported 11 to 15 days, 2% (3) between 16 and 20 days, and 16 households (10.5%) reported someone going without food more than 20 days during the year, because the family did not have any resources for food. Even though the percent of the total sample is relatively small, the fact that 15% had suffered physical hunger for even one day is significant.

Figure 16. NUMBER OF DAYS HOUSEHOLDS HAVE
GONE WITHOUT FOOD IN THE PAST YEAR BECAUSE
OF LACK OF RESOURCES
UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY,1985
N=1003



USE OF PROGRAMS

One of the objectives of this study is to describe the level of use of income and food assistance programs by the low income population. A second objective is to better understand why some potentially eligible people do not participate in the programs. Information regarding current use, past use, and length of program use was collected on thirteen indentified programs in the community. If a respondent in the study had never used a program they were asked why they had not, and this information was recorded. The responses as to why they had not used the programs were recorded and then categorized for reporting the data.

Each program is described separately by different divisions of the respondent population. The food assistance programs are described separately from the income assistance programs. Both are listed in order of the pervasiveness of current use by the total population. The following figures show the current participation levels of the food and income assistance programs in this study (Figure 17 and Figure 18).

Figure 17. PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS CURRENTLY PARTICIPATING IN FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY,1985
N=1003

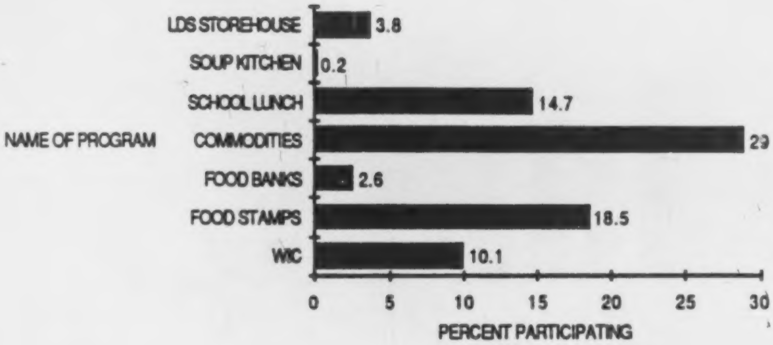
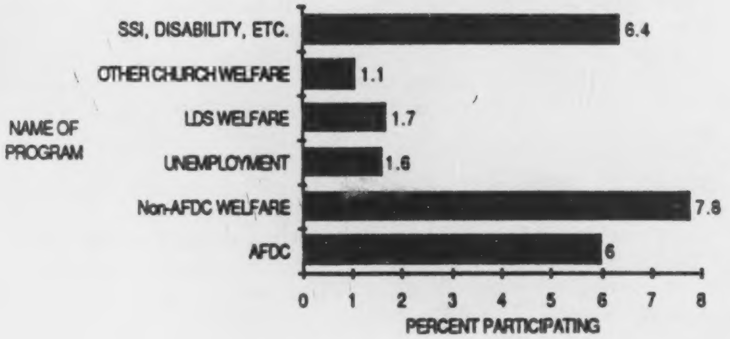


Figure 18. PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS CURRENTLY PARTICIPATING IN INCOME ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY,1985
N=1003



Only tables on the commodity foods program and the food stamps program are included as part of this summary report. The rest of the program descriptions are included in tables that can be located in an appendix to this report.

It is important to note that there are some general consistencies among the various data from the programs. The most noted characteristic of the data is that the majority of the households sampled do not participate in any of the programs. Food assistance programs are more widely used than income assistance programs. The tables give descriptions of the use of programs by age categories, geographic area, and by per captia income quartiles. Two of the programs are also characterized by ethnic origin.

Another trend that is characteristic of almost all of the findings, is that those people in the lowest income quartile, and presumbably the most vulnerable,consistently list not knowing about the programs as a reason for never participating in them. This information may have implications in terms of outreach to the poorest sector of the community.

A brief description of the commodity foods and food stamps programs, along with their respective tables, is included as an example. As previously noted, tables on the rest of the programs are included in an expanded version of this document .

Commodity Foods- The most popular program is the commodity foods program. This program is also described by the survey respondents as the "free cheese" program. Almost a third (29%) of the households surveyed were currently participating in the program. Almost seventeen percent (16.6%) had participated in the past. The average number of months in which people participated in the program was 6.8. A little more than half (54.3%) of the households had never participated in the program. Of those who had never participated, the most common reason for not participating was that they didn't know about the program (28.2%), about the same percentage (27.5%) responded that they felt like they shouldn't participate. Another fifth (20.7%) felt like they were not eligible for participation. Almost ten percent (9.5%) felt like they had no need for the program. Three percent (3.2) didn't participate because they had no transportation. Even fewer (2.1%) thought it was too much of a hassle to try to participate, and an additional seven (6.7%) had a variety of other reasons why they were not involved in the commodity program. Table 1.8 shows participation in the commodities program by age, geographic area, and by per capita income levels. Table 1.9 shows reasons given for not using the program.

Food Stamps- Food stamps was the second most frequently used program. Nineteen percent of all of the respondents were currently using this program. The average number of months in which people participated was 8.5. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents had never used the program. People 50 to 65 years of age were the most frequent users. Tables 1.10 through 1.13 shows the data on this program.

Table 1.8. Frequency of Using Commodity Foods Program by Age, Geographic Area, and Per Capita Income per Month. Utah Low Income Study, 1985.

	Frequency			
Category	Now	Past	Never	Average Number of Months Used
Total	29.0	16.6	54.3	6.8
Age				
<18	16.9	21.3	61.7	2.8
18-25	17.9	13.2	68.9	3.5
25-50	22.8	17.0	59.6	5.3
50-64	28.0	20.7	51.2	6.2
65+	37.7	9.9	52.4	9.6
Geographic Area				
Salt Lake City	26.6	12.7	60.5	5.4
Davis/Weber Counties	53.2	18.4	28.5	12.5
Utah County	9.8	32.9	57.3	3.1
Logan	36.7	20.0	43.3	13.4
Southern Utah	20.0	12.4	67.6	4.3
Per Capita Income				
<230	38.8	20.8	40.4	9.1
230-321	24.5	18.4	57.1	5.0
322-440	22.0	16.4	61.6	5.5
440+	31.7	10.3	57.0	7.8

Table 1.9. Reasons For Not Using Commodity Foods Program by Age, Geographic Area, and Per Capita Income per Month. Utah Low Income Study, 1985.

	Reasons							
Category	Didn't Know	Feel Shouldn't	Not Eligible	No Trans.	Other	No Need	Hassle	Non-Resident
Total	28.2	27.5	20.7	3.2	6.7	9.5	2.1	0.9
Age								
<18	34.8	33.0	17.0	0.9	8.9	2.7	0.9	1.8
18-25	26.9	20.2	24.0	0	12.5	11.5	1.9	0
25-50	25.0	28.0	27.0	2.0	5.0	10.0	1.0	1.0
50-64	31.0	26.2	26.2	2.4	0	4.8	7.1	2.4
65+	23.0	23.0	23.0	12.0	4.0	12.0	1.0	0
Geographic Area								
Salt Lake City	29.4	25.3	25.9	5.0	5.9	3.1	2.2	1.3
Davis/Weber	32.6	37.0	10.9	0	6.5	13.0	0	0
Utah County	30.9	28.4	4.9	1.2	14.8	18.5	0	1.2
Logan	23.1	69.2	7.7	0	0	0	0	0
Southern Utah	13.4	20.9	26.9	0	3.0	29.9	6.0	0
Per Capita Income								
<230	48.5	21.2	11.1	3.0	3.0	9.0	2.0	2.0
230-321	31.2	29.7	21.0	0.7	7.2	7.2	0	2.2
322-440	22.5	28.5	21.9	4.0	6.0	12.6	2.6	0
440+	17.7	27.7	25.5	5.0	9.9	9.2	3.5	0

Table 1.10. Frequency of Using the Food Stamps Program by Age, Geographic Area, and Per Capita Income per Month. Utah Low Income Study, 1985.

Category	Frequency			
	Now	Past	Never	Average Number of Months Used
Total	18.6	14.3	67.1	8.5
Age				
<18	14.8	16.4	68.9	5.2
18-25	11.3	11.3	77.5	4.9
25-50	18.2	20.6	61.2	8.5
50-64	24.4	13.4	62.2	11.3
65+	16.8	4.2	79.1	8.7
Geographic Area				
Salt Lake City	19.5	9.9	70.6	8.0
Davis/Weber Counties	28.5	19.0	52.8	12.5
Utah County	9.1	21.0	69.9	6.8
Logan	20.0	6.7	73.3	6.0
Southern Utah	11.5	20.2	68.3	6.8
Per Capita Income				
<230	37.7	24.6	37.7	16.7
230-321	15.5	15.9	68.6	8.2
322-440	12.0	12.0	76.0	5.4
440+	9.2	5.2	85.5	4.1

Table 1.11. Frequency of Using the Food Stamps Program by Race.
Utah Low Income Study, 1985.

Category	Frequency			
	Now	Past	Never	Average Number of Months Used
Race				
White	17.8	14.9	66.6	8.8
Black	10.8	10.8	78.4	5.4
Hispanic	25.3	10.1	64.6	9.2
Asian/Pacific	22.2	5.6	72.2	8.2
Native American	25.0	20.8	54.2	6.9

Table 1.13. Reasons For Not Using Food Stamps by Race.
Utah Low Income Study, 1985.

Category	Reasons							
	Didn't Know	Feel Shouldn't	Not Eligible	No Trans.	Other	No Need	Hassle	Non-Resident
Race								
White	5.3	45.9	28.8	1.0	5.8	10.9	2.3	0
Black	17.2	27.6	13.8	3.4	27.6	3.4	6.9	0
Hispanic	20.3	25.0	34.4	0	7.8	3.1	4.7	4.7
Asian/Pacific	25.6	23.1	23.1	0	15.4	2.6	5.1	5.1
Native American	7.7	7.7	46.2	0	30.8	0	7.7	0

Table 1.12. Reasons For Not Using The Food Stamps Program by Age, Geographic Area, and Per Capita Income per Month. Utah Low Income Study, 1985.

				Reasons				
Category	Didn't Know	Feel Shouldn't	Not Eligible	No Trans.	Other	No Need	Hassle	Non-Resident
Total	8.3	40.5	29.0	1.1	8.1	9.0	3.3	0.8
Age								
<18	9.5	46.0	22.2	0	13.5	2.4	4.8	1.6
18-25	6.8	30.8	33.3	0.9	10.3	12.8	3.4	0
25-50	4.7	34.9	40.6	0	4.7	10.4	2.8	0.9
50-64	3.9	35.3	52.9	0	0	2.0	3.9	2.0
65+	12.0	41.3	21.3	4.0	8.0	10.7	2.7	0
Geographic Area								
Salt Lake City	12.6	32.8	37.9	1.9	7.5	2.9	3.5	1.1
Davis/Weber	4.9	55.6	22.2	0	4.9	11.1	1.2	0
Utah County	3.0	46.5	13.1	0	20.2	16.2	0	1.0
Logan	0	90.9	4.5	0	0	0	4.5	0
Southern Utah	12.0	41.3	21.3	4.0	8.0	10.7	2.7	0
Per Capita Income								
<230	15.1	37.6	21.5	0	9.7	9.7	4.3	2.2
230-321	6.6	40.7	30.5	0.6	9.6	7.2	3.0	1.8
322-440	7.9	40.6	31.6	0.5	5.9	11.2	3.2	0
440+	8.0	41.3	28.6	2.3	8.5	8.5	2.8	0

Anthropometric and Dietary Findings

Introduction

One of the primary questions that this study is trying to answer is, are there low income people in Utah who are not 1) not meeting their nutritional needs, and 2) at risk in terms of nutrition related health status? In order to answer these questions, anthropometric and dietary data were collected on one member of each household. The sample contains a variety of people from every age group. Of the 1020 families interviewed, dietary and anthropometric data was usable on 950 individuals.

Results

Anthropometric Findings

Among the children there were some with abnormal growth patterns. The most prevalent problem was short stature for age among children. Almost one-third (32.8%) of the children in the sample were below the 5th percentile using height for age as the criteria. Fifty-four (53.7%) were normal and thirteen (13.4%) had height for age reported above the 95th percentile. This indicates a tendency for the children to be shorter than the average population. An analysis of the weight for age data on the same population shows that more of them nearly three-forths (71.6%) were in the normal range. Only sixteen (15.7%) were below the 5th percentile weight for age and almost thirteen (12.8%) of the children were above the 95th percentile weight for age.

Table 2.2 Height for Age, Weight for Age and
Weight for Height Categories of Children Ages 0 to 14 years
Utah Low Income Families, Utah 1985. N= 208

Category	Normal	≤5th %tile	≥95th %tile
Height for Age	53.7	32.8	13.4
Weight for Age	71.6	15.7	12.8
Weight for Height	53.7	8.0	38.1

Table 2.3 Height for Age, Weight for Age and
Weight for Height Categories of Children Ages 1-5
Utah Low Income Families, Utah 1985. N= 122

Category	Normal	≤5th %tile	≥95th %tile
Height for Age	48.7	33.3	17.9
Weight for Age	66.7	20.5	12.8
Weight for Height	76.9	10.3	12.8

Table 2.4 Height for Age, Weight for Age and
Weight for Height Categories of Children Ages 6-14
Utah Low Income Families, Utah 1985. N=64

Category	Normal	≤5th %tile	≥95th %tile
Height for Age	64.9	27.0	8.1
Weight for Age	72.9	16.2	10.8
Weight for Height	43.2	5.4	51.3

A breakdown of the children by age groupings ages 1-5 years and ages 6-14 years reveals insignificant differences in the percent of children who are of short stature (≤5th percentile). Approximately one-third of them fall into this category. There are similar trends among the underweight children. Approximately one-fifth of the children in both age groups are underweight for their age. There is a significant difference in the numbers of children whose weight for height is greater than the 95th percentile. About 13 percent(12.8) of the children under 5 years of age fall into this category as compared to more than half (51.4%) who are ages 6-14 in this same category.

DIETARY FINDINGS

Dietary information was collected on one individual in each household. The information to be reported in this part of the study is related to the foods eaten, nutritional habits, and nutrient intake status of the population.

Food Frequencies. The data from the study indicates there are differences in the frequency of foods consumed in this population. The smaller children ate more frequently throughout the day. The majority of the adults ate between two and four times per day.

Table 2.6 Numbers of Meals and Snacks Consumed by the
Population by Percent in each Age Group.
Utah Low Income Study. Utah 1985.

# of Meals & Snacks	Age Categories in Years of Age						
	1-5	6-14	15-18	19-50	>50Female	>50Male	Total Population
N=	122	64	36	380	265	61	928
1	0	0	0	3.2	2.9	0	2.2
2	6.6	0	25.0	20.5	20.9	26.4	19.0
3	9.8	26.0	34.4	38.1	46.4	49.1	37.5
4	21.3	28.0	25.0	19.7	23.8	17.1	22.8
>4	62.3	46.0	15.6	18.5	6.9	7.6	19.7

The average individual in the total population consumed 11 foods per day. There are not significant differences between the age groups. The infants as expected consumed fewer foods than the older children and adults. The younger children ages 1 to 5 consumed an average of almost one food more than the older population.

Table 2.7 Average Number of Foods Consumed by Age Groupings Utah Low Income Study. Utah 1985.

Age Category	Average # of Foods Consumed	Range	% who ate less than 10 Foods	% who ate less than 15 Foods
≤6 months	4.9	1-19	91.6	91.6
>6 months	5.4	1-9	100.0	100.0
1-5 years	11.9	2-21	37.7	86.0
6-14 years	11.6	5-18	42.2	87.5
15-18 years	10.7	4-19	44.4	91.6
19-50 years	10.9	1-26	45.5	87.1
Females >50	10.5	2-24	51.3	93.9
Males >50	10.4	3-16	44.2	96.7
Total Population	10.8	1-26	46.9	89.9

Tables showing the most frequently consumed foods for each age category were compiled. Not all of these tables are included in this report. They are available in an appendix. The following tables are an example of those included in the analysis of these data. The foods are listed in order of frequency of consumption per day.

Table 2.8 Most Frequently Consumed Foods by Total Population Utah Low Income Study. Utah 1985. N= 950.

Food	Frequency	Average Intake in Grams	Number Common Servings (Approximate)
White Bread	485	68	21/2 slices
Whole Milk	331	443	2 cups
Whole Wheat Bread	304	57	2 slices
2% Milk	287	531	2 cups
Margarine	275	11	2 tsp
Hamburger	220	88	3 ounces
Mayonnaise	214	19	1 1/3 Tbsp
Soda Pop	206	565	1 1/2 cans
Tomatoes, Raw	169	49	1/2 tomato
Butter	161	11	2 tsp
Coffee,Black	156	690	2 3/4 cups
American Cheese	145	41	1 1/2 ounces
Jam/Jelly	127	11	2 tsp
Lettuce	124	15	2 leaves
Orange Juice	122	267	1 cup
Catsup	122	10	2 tsp
Bacon	109	133	5 slices
French Fried Potatoes	106	115	1/2 cup
Peanut Butter	105	20	1 1/2 Tbsp
Ice Cream	103	157	1 cup
Tossed Salad	101	105	1 cup

Table 2.9 Most Frequently Consumed Foods by Ages 1 to 5 Years Utah Low Income Study, 1985. N=122

Food	Frequency	Average Intake in Grams	Number of Common Servings (Approximate)
White Breads	77	55	2 slices
2%Milk	64	621	2 1/2 cups
Whole Milk	48	531	2 cups
Peanut Butter	41	18	1 Tbsp
Jam/Jelly	37	11	2 tsp
Kool-Aid	34	367	1 1/2 cups
Whole Wheat Breads	30	48	2 slices
Margarine	28	8	1 1/5 tsp
Popcicle	25	84	1 1/2 popcicles
Hamburger	23	63	2 1/4 ounces
Mayonnaise	23	12	1 Tbsp
Banana	22	116	1 Medium
Butter	22	10	2 tsp
Hot Dog	21	58	2 oz. (2 hotdogs)
Ice Cream	20	90	2/3 cup

Using these foods as a guide, a typical meal pattern for a small child would be: A glass of milk and a peanut butter and jelly sandwich to eat for breakfast. A mid morning snack of a banana. A hamburger with kool-Aid to drink for lunch. A hot dog for dinner with milk , and ice cream for a bed time snack. There were no vegetables in the most frequently consumed foods in this age group and theonly fruit was a banana.

Nutrient Intakes. Nutrient analysis was done for 17 nutrients. The results are reported by three categories of percent of RDA achieved, 1) the percent of those individuals who received less than 100% of the RDA, 2) those who obtained less than two-thirds of the RDA, and 3) the percent of individuals who consumed less than one-third of the RDA for each of the nutrients.

Information on the nutrient intake of the sample was done for each of five age groups, and older men and women. For brevity of this report, only an example showing the nutrient intake of the total population is included. Tables that have these data by age categories are available in an appendix to this report.

Table 2.16 Nutrient Intake of Total Population of Study by Percent of RDA Consumed and Mean Intakes of 17 Nutrients.
Utah Low Income Study. Utah, 1985. N= 950

Nutrient		**Percent of RDA**			
Intake less than :	<100%	<66.6%	<33.3%	Mean	± S.D.
Energy, Kcal	72.8	39.7	5.9	1511.5	639.3
Protein, gm	22.9	7.9	1.9	63.4	28.6
Vitamin A, I.U.	55.4	35.4	14.5	4304.0	3581.8
Vitamin D, I.U.	72.8	58.5	33.3	175.1	163.1
Vitamin E, I.U.	62.8	45.2	27.4	9.7	10.1
Vitamin C, mg	50.2	33.7	15.2	73.6	64.1
Folic Acid, mg	85.5	75.7	45.6	159.8	124.9
Niacin, mg	48.3	22.3	5.4	15.2	9.0
Riboflavin, mg	35.6	18.5	4.3	1.6	.9
Thiamin, mg	51.2	24.9	5.3	1.1	.6
Vitamin B6, mg	82.3	65.4	29.2	2.0	.8
Vitamin B12, mcg	54.8	36.2	17.1	4.9	58.4
Calcium, mg	54.0	29.1	12.0	867.0	599.4
Phosphorus, mg	29.7	12.3	2.3	1101.6	523.4
Iron, mg	70.4	44.8	10.2	10.8	5.7
Magnesium, mg	79.2	50.8	15.9	197.3	104.6
Zinc, mg	90.8	69.9	25.2	7.8	8.9

A large majority of the population are not receiving 100 or even 67 percent of the Recommended Daily Allowance for the nutrients analyzed. However, because of individual biological variation and adaptation, the focus of this discussion will be on those who are recieving less than one-third of the recommendation.

Table 2.23 Comparison of Percent of Respondents by Age Groups who Are Receiving Less than 1/3 of the RDA for the Eight most limiting Nutrients in the Sample. Utah Low Income Study. Utah, 1985.

Age Groups	% in Each Group Receiving Less than 1/3 of the RDA						Total Sample
	1-5 years	6-14 years	15-18 years	19-50 years	F>50 years	M>50 years	
Nutrient							
Folic Acid	4.9	42.2	38.9	57.4	52.4	47.5	45.6
B_6	3.3	17.2	16.7	33.4	35.8	52.4	29.2
Zinc	4.1	7.8	19.4	30.5	32.4	32.8	25.2
B_{12}	5.7	7.8	19.4	23.9	16.9	11.4	17.1
Magnesium	4.1	4.7	25.0	21.3	14.7	22.9	15.9
Vitamin A	2.5	3.1	19.4	20.8	13.6	18.0	14.5
Vitamin C	5.7	9.4	11.1	19.2	16.2	18.0	15.2
Calcium	3.3	6.3	13.9	16.6	12.1	9.8	12.0

The most limiting nutrient among all age groups is Folic Acid. More than half of the adults over 19 years attained less than 1/3 of the RDA for this nutrient in their diets. Almost sixty (57.4) percent of the 19 to fifty year olds fell into this category. The least affected group was the children 1 to 5 years of age, only five (4.9) percent of these children had consumed less than a third of the recommended allowance.

The older men were those with the least intake of Vitamin B6, more than half (52.4%) of them did not meet 1/3 of the RDA. One third (33.4%) of the 19 to 50 year olds, and about the same percent(35.8) of the older females fell into this category. Again considerably more of the 1 to 5 year olds achieved adequate intakes of B6. Only 3.3 percent of them did not get at least a third of the recommended allowance. Almost a fifth, 17.2 and 16.7 percent respectively of the 6 to 14 and 15 to 18 year olds did not attain adequate B6 in their diets.

Zinc appears to be the next most limiting nutrient in this study. Again a third of the adults over 19 did not attain 1/3 of the RDA for Zinc. A fifth (19.4%) of the 15 to 18 year olds fell into this category. Four (4.1) percent of the smaller children ages 1 to 5 and eight (7.8) percent of the 6 to 14 year olds failed to meet 1/3 of the RDA for this nutrient.

Vitamin B12 was more of a problem for the middle age population than for the older or younger individuals. Slightly less than a fourth (23.9%) of the 19 to 50 year olds did not get at least a third of the recommended allowance. A fifth

(19.4) of the teenagers 15 to 18 years old did not get enough B12. The older men had less trouble with this nutrient than many of the others, only 11.4 percent of them did not meet at least a third of the allowance for B12.

The teenage population ages 15 to 18 were the least likely to have adequate amounts of magnesium in their diets. A full 25 percent of them did fall into the less than 1/3 of the RDA category. The next most affected groups were the 19 to 50 year olds and the older men, with about 20 percent of each group falling into this category. About fifteen (14.7) percent of the older women did not get enough magnesium. Less than 5 percent of the children 1 to 14 did not meet 1/3 of the RDA for this mineral.

About a fifth of the teenagers, 19 to 50 year olds, and the older men did not get enough Vitamin A in their diets. The older women did slightly better, fourteen (13.6) percent of them fell into the less than 1/3 of the RDA category. Fewer than three percent of the children did not get at least a third of the recommended amount of Vitamin A in their diet.

Vitamin C was the next most infrequently consumed nutrient. About a fifth, 19.2% and 18% of the 19 to 50 year olds and older men respectively did not get adequate amounts of this vitamin. Sixteen (16.2) percent of the older women fell into this category. About ten percent (11.1) of the teenagers ,and 9.4% of the children 6 to 14 years old did not achieve 1/3 of the RDA for Vitamin C. Less than six (5.7) percent of the smaller children fell into this category.

Seventeen (16.6) percent of the 19 to 50 year olds, 13.9 percent of the teenagers, twelve percent of the older women, and ten percent of the older men did not get at least a third of what is recommended for intake of Calcium. Six (6.3) percent of the children 6 to 14 and 3.3 percent of the 1 to 5 year olds fell into this same category.

Table 2.24 The 10 Most Limiting Nutrients in Order of Occurance of Less Than 1/3 of RDA for Total Population.
Utah Low Income Study. Utah 1985. N= 950.

Nutrient	Percent of Sample Receiving < 1/3 of the RDA
1. Folic Acid	45.6
2. Vitamin B_6	29.2
3. Zinc	25.2
4. Vitamin B_{12}	17.1
5. Magnesium	15.9
6. Vitamin C	15.2
7. Vitamin A	14.5
8. Calcium	12.0
9. Iron	10.2
10. Energy	5.9

The most limiting nutrient among all age groups is folic acid. Almost half (45.57%) of the total population received less than one-third of the recommended amount per day. Vitamin B_6 is the second most frequently limiting nutrient among all age groups. About a third of the population studied did not get adequate amounts of this vitamin. Twenty five percent of the total population did not get enough Zinc. Vitamin B12, Magnesium, Vitamin C ,Vitamin A, and Calcium were the next most infrequently consumed nutrients. About ten percent of the population did not meet at least 1/3 of the RDA for Iron. The last nutrient of the ten most limiting nutrients was energy, or Kilocalories. Approximately six (5.9) percent of the sample fell into this category.

DIETARY AND FEEDING PRACTICES

Breastfeeding. The question asked for this information was "How long did you breastfeed your youngest child?" It is important to note that this does not imply that the individuals are currently breastfeeding.

The age groupings for this question are based on the ages of the individuals who were included in the dietary history. For example, if the diet history individual was a child less than 18, then these people are included in the less than 18 years old category. This does not mean that the individual who was breastfeeding is under 18 years of age.

Table 2.26 Average Duration of Breastfeeding Among Households Age, Geographic Area, and Income Levels.
Utah Low Income Study. Utah 1985.

Per Capita Income	Weeks Breastfed Youngest Child
< $230	13.3
231-321	11.9
322-440	9.9
>$440	5.2

Age Groupings	Weeks Breastfed Youngest Child
Under 18	13.6
18-25	9.7
25-50	12.4
50-64	5.2
Over 65	9.7

Geographic Area N=1003	Weeks Breastfed Youngest Child
Davis/Weber Countys	7.4
Logan Area	9.8
Salt Lake	11.1
Utah County	13.9
Southern Utah	14.2

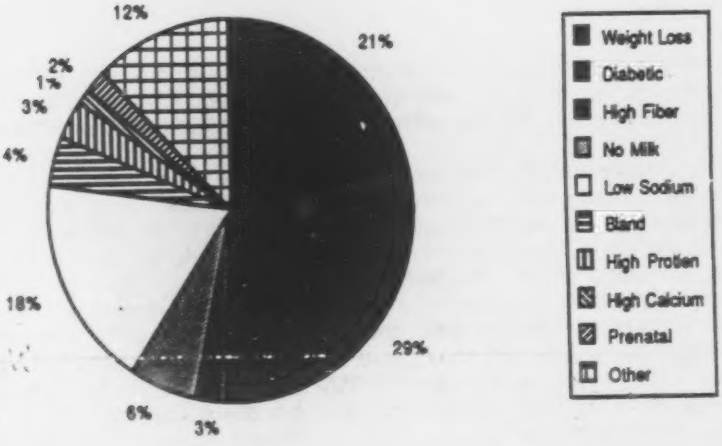
Total Population
11.06 weeks average

The average duration of breastfeeding of the youngest child in each family was reported to be about three months. There are interesting differences in the length of breastfeeding among different groups of people. For example, those families whose per capita income was in the lowest quartile breastfed more than twice as long as those in the highest income quartile-an average of 13 weeks for families making less than $230 per capita per month compared to only 5 weeks for those families with per capita incomes of greater than $440 per month. A breakdown of average number of weeks infants were breastfed by geographic area shows a difference among the five divisions of the data. The families in Southern Utah and Utah County breastfed almost two times longer than those in Davis and Weber Counties. This difference could be attributed to a difference in ethnic diversity among the sample in the Davis and Weber County areas.

There is a slight difference in the duration of breastfeeding between the older and younger people. Families who had children who were less than 18 years of age breastfed almost a month longer on the average than the older population. This could reflect a trend consistant with the rest of the population to choose breastfeeding as the method for feeding infants.

Special Diets. Almost 25% of the total sample population, or 210 individuals of 1003, are on a special diet. The question on kinds of diet was open ended and the top nine kinds of diets are described here. The diet information is described by age groupings, geographic area, and by income levels. The most common special diet is a diabetic diet, about 6 percent of the households in the study have at least one diabetic in the home. Of the total numbers of special diets reported, 29 percent were diabetic. The second most frequently reported special diet was a weight loss diet. Of the people on diets, one-fifth (22%) of them are on a weight loss diet.

Figure 19. TYPE OF SPECIAL DIET REPORTED.
UTAH LOW INCOME STUDY, 1985



Use of Vitamin Supplements. Approximately one-fifth of the population (19.58%) take a multiple vitamin supplement every day. The older males are the most frequent users, more than one-fourth (26.08%) take a vitamin daily. The second most frequently used vitamin is Vitamin C, about 6% of the total population in the study takes supplemental Vitamin C. Almost twice as many older males take Vitamin C than the rest of the population.

The most frequent users of calcium are older females, about 10% of them take a calcium supplement, while of the 19-50 year old group, less than 2% take calcium supplements. The next most frequently used supplement is iron. The 19 to 50 year olds reported about 10% (9.89%) taking an iron supplement every day.

The other two supplements reported were protein and folic acid. Less than one percent (.7 and .73 respectively) of the sample take these supplements.

Table 2.15 Use of Vitamins as Supplements by Total Population and by Age Groupings of Adults.
Utah Low Income Study. Utah 1985.

Vitamin Supplements	N=950 Total Population	N=380 19-50 yrs.	N=265 Female>50	N=61 Male>50
Multiple Vitamin	19.6	20.9	17.4	26.1
Vitamin C	6.5	8.1	4.9	10.9
Calcium	4.4	1.8	10.2	6.5
Iron	4.7	9.9	1.3	0
Protein	.7	.7	0	0
Folic Acid	.7	.7	0	0

Discussion

The results of this study are fairly consistent with other studies that have been done on various population groups. This section will very briefly discuss some comparisons in first the anthropometric data, and then the dietary data.

The anthropometric data reveal a higher incidence of growth abnormalities in children than is expected in a population of this size. More children were at the extremes of the normal range, either shorter or taller; thinner or fatter than could be expected. For example, in comparing the 1 to 5 year olds in this study with a population of WIC children reveals the following. In a group of 37,679 children on the WIC program in Utah there were 13.4 percent who were below the 5th percentile height for age, there were in contrast 33% of the children in this study who are considered short for their age. Additionally, 18% of the children in this study were also tall (≥95th percentile height for age) compared to only 3.4% in the WIC population. Similarly there were differences in weight for age between the two groups. The WIC data contained 8.8% of the children below the 5th percentile weight for age compared to 20.5% in this study. There were 12.8 % of the children in this study who were above the 95th percentile weight for age compared to 6.4% of the children from the WIC data who were heavy for their age.. The differences were not as large between the two groups when the data is compared using weight for height, nevertheless, there were about three times more thinner children 3.4% in the WIC group compared to 10.3% in this group. There were twice as many heavier children in this study, 12.8% compared to 6.3% in this category in the WIC data

The reasons for these differences is not known. There are several possible explanations. One is the obvious difference in sample size. Another is the difference in precision in the data collection methods. The data from this study were collected in the homes of the families, and in spite of training of the interviewers and standardization of equipment errors in measurements could have occurred.

The nutrient intake and dietary components of this study are very revealing. The food frequency data shows that there are very few vegetables consumed in this population. In spite of the fact that this study was done in the summer months, when theoretically there should be more vegetables available, the consumption of vegetables and expecially dark green and leafy ones is minimal. The food frequency data also points to a trend toward fast food consumption especially among the younger population.

The consequences of the choices that people make in their food intake is reflected in the deficiencies in nutrients. The nutrients found to be lacking in the population in this study are also those found in the national nutrition surveys. For example, all of the major nutrition studies have found, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, Calcium, and Iron to be "problem" nutrients. A recently released report of the findings of the Nationwide Food Consumption Survey Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals indicates that Vitamin B6, calcium, magnesium, iron, folacin and zinc were low in the diets of the women and children in that study. The data from this study show that Folic Acid, Vitamin B6, Zinc, Vitamin B12, Magnesium, Vitamin C, Vitamin A, Calcium, and Iron are the most limiting nutrients in the diets of Utahns in this study.

SUMMARY

The following are highlights of the results of the questionnare and the anthropometric and dietary findings.

Education levels of females were lower than that of males. Minority women had the least eduction of all of the groups in the study. Half of the native American, blacks, and hispanic women had less than a high school education compared to one third of the white women.

Income levels in this population were 15% less than the national average. Utahns in this study were spending 22% of their income on food compared to 19% across the nation. The poorest of the poor, those who fell into the lowest per capita income category (<$230 per month) were spending more than 1/3 of their income on food which was twice as much as the highest income quartile (>$440 per month). Eleven percent of the poorest people were spending more than half of their income on food.

In spite of the fact that this survey was conducted in the summer, gardens did not play a significant role in the provision of food for the family. Additionally, few families reportedly had food storage. A quarter of the households had less than a one week supply of food.

Unemployment was not a significant problem in this sample. Only 3.3% of the sample considered themselves unemployed. Almost half of the households surveyed worked in blue collar jobs.

About 40% of the people felt that they were not meeting their basic needs (compared to 20% in a national survey conducted by Gallup). If the households were given an extra ten dollars the majority 54.9% reported that they would have spent it on food.

When the households in the study are in need they go first to their families (46%) then to public assistance (22%) and then to church programs (18%).

Thirty-seven percent felt that they were financially worse off this year than they were last year. This compares to 29% from a national poll. There were 40% who felt that they would be better off next year, compared to 52% nationally.

Seventy percent felt that their health was good. The most frequent response when asked what would improve their health was better access to health care. There were almost a quarter of the households who had gone at least one time during the year without medical care because they could not afford it.

There were 15 percent of the households in which one or more people had not eaten at least one day in the past year because of lack of resources for food.

The majority of the households did not use any type of public assistance programs. The range of use was from a high of 29% of the sample participating in the commodities food program to less than 1% who had used any type of soup kitchen. On the average between 50 and 80% of the households questioned had never used any of the thirteen programs listed. Food assistance programs were more widely used than income assistance programs.

The most frequent reasons for not participating in the programs were that people either felt that they should not use public assistance or reported that they were not eligible. Often there appeared to be a lack of understanding of the programs and what the actual eligibility requirements might be.

A trend characteristic of all of the programs was that those people in the poorest income quartile, the "poorest of the poor" , consistently listed not knowing about the programs as a reason for having never participated in them. For many of the programs the poorest people listed this response twice as often at the highest income quartile.

The anthropometric and dietary information was collected using the Nutrient Dietary Data Analysis system (NDDA). The NDDA system is a package using a diet history form that is read directly into the computer by an optical scanner. The results of this part of the study revealed some interesting information about nutritional status and dietary intakes among low income families in Utah.

There were more children at the extremes of the growth curves than expected. There were 33 percent of the children ages 1 to 5 years who were short (≤ 5th percentile height for age). In addition, there were 18% who were tall (≥ 95th percentile height for age). About twice as many children were either underweight or overweight than could be expected, ten percent were at each extreme. In the 6 to 14 year old age group, using self reported data, thirty percent of these children were short, and about half of the children were overweight (≥ 95th percentile weight for height).

The most frequently consumed foods among all groups were: Bread (white and whole wheat), milk (whole and 2%), followed by margarine, hamburger, mayonnaise, and soda pop. The least frequently consumed foods by any age group were vegetables. Fruits were mentioned very infrequently.

Older people reported that they ate fewer times a day than children. A quarter of the adults ate less than 3 times a day.

One-fifth of the sample population reported taking a multiple vitamin every day.

The ten most limiting nutrients among all ages, in order of occurrence were folic acic, vitamin B6, zinc, vitamin B12, magnesium, vitamin C, vitamin A, calcium, iron and energy. These results are similar to nutrient intake studies nationwide. There were differences between age groups.

The average duration of breastfeeding was about three months. The lowest income group breastfed twice as often as the highest income group. Younger women are breastfeeding more now than did the previous generation of women.

Almost 25% of the total sample population were on a special diet. Older people reported being on a special diet about twice as often as the younger people. The three most common types of diets were diabetic, weight loss, and low sodium.

These are some of the highlights of the paper, more detailed descriptions are contained in the text. Additionally, a more comprehensive analysis of the data is contained in an expanded appendix to this report.

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The **Chairman**. Let me ask you a followup question, the same question that I did Dr. Gershoff, there are studies that indicate no correlation between income and nutritional status in this country, and I pointed out the women from families with high incomes suffer certain nutritional deficiencies and maybe the same type of deficiencies as women below the poverty line. There are also studies that show little if any correlation between income levels and nutritional diseases in children existed as well.

Let me ask you, do we need to invest more resources in food and dissemination of food, through our current Federal food programs, or should we spend more time on educational dissemination?

Ms. **Parker**. Well, first of all, I think that I would have to say like everyone else, and I do not mean this to be a cop out, that it is a complex issue and obviously hunger exists in different families for different reasons. We would have to admit that, but I think that everyone would also have to admit that income plays an important contributory role in many families and most families and it plays different roles depending on other things, such as education of the mother and all sorts of other things.

But we cannot neglect to realize that income is terribly important. How much money one has to spend on food does make a difference, but because families are in different situations, mass studies on people do not always show those direct correlations that you talk about.

Let me talk from my own personal experience. I worked with a nutrition education program for low-income families in New York State, called the Expanded Nutrition Education Program, and it is all over the country. You may have heard about it. It is operated through the extension service. My experience with that program was that I found that there were families who needed more information on nutrition and wanted it but what I also found was that among our own staff, who were not nutritionists, there were many people who needed nutrition information and wanted it.

I think that we all could benefit from nutrition education. The difference, or the distinction for me was that when I walked into a family home in New York City or in the rural upstate New York and I found an empty cupboard, the first thing that I wanted to do was to make sure that family had food. Just as they say, you cannot teach a hungry child, a low-income homemaker who is trying to get food for her children is not ready to pay attention to information about nutrition or about food shopping. She needs food first. So I think that while we are talking about nutrition education, we always have to focus on the need for some sort of national insurance program to make sure that families do have food—food before education. I think that the other thing that we stated in our testimony, and was particularly relevant to this committee, is we would agree that what would be most preferrable is that everyone have the income to be able to purchase the food and make wise food choices. And at that time, the education programs would be very useful. But I think that at the point we are now, we need to keep our eyes focused on the need for some kind of national floor to make sure that people do get enough money to purchase food.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Parker and responses to questions submitted by Senators Hatch and Grassley follow:]

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HUNGER IN AMERICA

Testimony before the Senate Committee on
Labor and Human Resources

Presented by:

Lynn Parker
Senior Nutritionist
Food Research and
Action Center

May 21, 1986

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am pleased that you, Mr. Chairman, and members of this committee are taking an active interest in ways to alleviate the problem of hunger in America. Hunger is a national problem. It is a problem that affects many people of every race, of both sexes, young and old alike. The causes of hunger are many and complex. The roots of the problem go beyond the lack of food. For many, the problem stems from deep-seated economic problems that are beyond the scope of either private or federal food programs.

This weekend, as millions of Americans join hands in a tremendous effort to raise money and to raise concern over the problems of hunger and homelessness, it is important to use this event as a beginning and not an end in itself. Hands Across America is an opportunity to involve millions of people in developing lasting solutions to our hunger and homeless problems.

I hope this Committee will view the Food Research and Action Center as an ally and a resource in developing those solutions. Founded in 1970 as a public interest law firm, FRAC has now become a national center seeking lasting solutions to hunger and the related problem of poverty. Through a multi-disciplinary staff of attorneys, nutritionists, field workers and researchers, FRAC works with an extensive field network of low income persons -- including the National Anti-Hunger Coalition -- statewide food committees, food bank operators, legal service attorneys, and other advocates for the poor, to stay in touch with the reality of how federal programs affect people's lives.

The Hunger Problem: Its Effect on Health, Education and Productivity

Hunger is the physiological and psychological state resulting when immediate food needs are not met. It becomes a problem when it is frequent and/or long-lasting. Hunger has immediate negative effects on learning behavior and productivity. It also has longer-term, more severe effects, leading to chronic undernutrition due to inadequate quantity or quality in the diet and all the problems associated with this continuing state of marginal nutrition.

Undernutrition of infants can begin with long-term hunger and undernutrition of the mother. An infant may be born premature and/or low birth-weight as a result of poor maternal nutrition. This puts him or her at greater risk of death and of short and long-term health and developmental problems.

Hunger is difficult to measure, but undernutrition in children becomes measurable after it has been present for a period of time. First the rate of weight gain goes down, and then the rate of increase in height. Thus, a sign of early undernutrition shows up in decreased weight in relation to height and in relation to age. Chronic undernutrition shows up in decreased height and weight even though the weight may seem appropriate for the height. Thus, just looking at a child, or an adult for that matter, does not necessarily tell you whether they are hungry or undernourished. The problem with using heights and weights to measure undernutrition is that most measures like these cannot be used until the lack of food has gone on for a significant amount of time, and intellectual and emotional effects have already occurred.

Because of these intellectual and emotional effects, hunger and undernutrition can rob infants and children of their ability to attain their full potential as human beings. They are likely to reduce their activity to make up for inadequate nutritional intake. This results in a passive child unable to interact with his environment. Yet, it is through this very interaction, including the response of the environment to the child, that a child learns. This child will also show a low tolerance for frustration, increased irritability, and an inability to pay attention in school -- just the opposite of the skills needed to do well in an academic environment.

A very specific example of the cognitive effects of hunger is the impact of not having breakfast. Recent, carefully controlled experiments with children have shown a very large negative impact of fasting (in this case not eating breakfast) on children's performance on tests. Based on this evidence, one can surmise that the cumulative impact of many missed meals on school performance is very great.

Interpersonal skills -- also essential for learning -- will probably be weak in the hungry and undernourished child. Because of the child's passivity, these skills often are not developed fully earlier in life. Finally, the effect of all this on the child's self-esteem cannot be overestimated. Dr. Merrill S. Read, current chair of the Nutrition Department at the University of Maryland has put it very well:

> "The hungry child is apathetic, disinterested, and irritable when confronted with difficult tasks. He tends to live in a world of his own, relatively independent of the world around him. To the extent that his parents, peers, or teachers respond negatively to his behaviors, his isolation is increased...being hungry in a world where others are not decreases one's sense of self worth, further stigmatizing the child in his own eyes and those of his teachers. Thus he fails to learn for social and psychological reasons, not for biological or neurological ones. The net effect is the same, however: another child has failed to achieve his full potential."

Losses in later achievement and economic productivity, though difficult to estimate, surely are great among adults who were hungry and undernourished as children.

The undernutrition that develops from chronic hunger also decreases resistance to infection, in both children and adults, and increases the severity and duration of illnesses. Ironically, infection also increases nutrient losses and increases energy requirements, further deteriorating nutritional status. Illness also means absence from school, further decreasing the opportunities for learning. In addition, iron deficiency anemia, which is common in chronically undernourished children, increases susceptibility to lead poisoning. It is difficult to estimate the national cost of health care, hospitalization and lost productivity that results from chronic undernutrition, but it must be significant.

Sometimes we forget that the elderly are also affected by hunger and undernutrition. There are obviously many inevitable physiological changes connected with aging that increase the risk of malnutrition, but hunger and undernutrition can only exacerbate these problems. They make chronic and acute diseases worse, bring on degenerative diseases faster, and increase susceptibility to disease, its duration, and its severity. In fact, recent research in Missouri has demonstrated that elderly people at nutritional risk use more emergency care, make more physician visits and are in the hospital more often -- the three most expensive aspects of the Medicare reimbursement system.

For those who are particularly concerned about the future of the American family, hunger and undernutrition should be a major worry. A family that is preoccupied with getting the basics of food, shelter and health care in today's society, has little time or energy to focus on all the other important aspects of raising children and creating a good family life. Hunger can only increase the stress of a family already under pressure because they cannot afford the basics. And for those concerned about intergenerational poverty, hunger and undernutrition should also be of great concern. Undernourished mothers and hungry fathers mean babies who are sickly and children who can't learn well. These children have a very good chance of being undernourished mothers and unemployed fathers when they grow up, while their mothers and fathers spend their older years more ill more often than they should.

Because we know the consequences of hunger and undernutriton can be severe, especially for children, we are concerned about the continuing reports about families who are in chronic need of food. The reports are becoming more sophisticated, thorough, and academically defensible, and the message is the same -- many families with children are living on less than adequate diets for longer periods of time.

Last year, the Food Research and Action Center surveyed emergency food providers from around the country and found need for emergency food increased by 17 percent between 1984 and 1985. The people we talked to told us that the hunger problem was continuing to reach beyond people's traditional view of who a hungry person is.

Mary Brelsford, a food pantry worker in Quincy, Mass. told us, "Hunger is increasing particularly among working families. Rents are escalating beyond incomes."

Rev. Mickey Istre who runs a soup kitchen at his church in Jennings, Louisiana noted, "On the average, we feed 200 families per month, and still there are many unreached in our community of 12,000 plus. Our economy has put many families into the need category."

Overall, 69 percent of the people we surveyed said that over half of the people who came to them in need of emergency food were families with children.

In a similar study of food assistance in urban areas, the United States Conference of Mayors reported that the need for emergency food is expected to increase in all but one of the cities surveyed in 1986. This comes on top of a major increase in 1985.

Bread for the World, a Christian citizens' organization involved in ending both domestic and international hunger, reported that federal food programs are not reaching all the people who are eligible to receive those benefits.

Public Voice for Food and Health Policy, a consumer research and advocacy organization, reported some of the health effects of hunger on the rural poor. That group found:

- o Rural poor children were more likely to suffer from stunted growth than were the rural non-poor;
- o The rural poor were more likely to consume less than two-thirds the recommended amount of the nine nutrients than were the rural non-poor; and,
- o The infant mortality rate increased in 85 of the poorest rural counties despite a decline in the national infant mortality rate.

In addition, the Mayor of San Francisco will soon be releasing the results of a two year study of hunger in that city. Through the combined efforts of the Mayor's office and a task force of concerned community members, including the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, this investigation of hunger in San Francisco has revealed that nearly 25 percent of the population are at risk of hunger; among other findings.

Two State Studies Point To Low Participation In Food Programs

One of the most recent state reports -- the 1985 Utah Nutrition Monitoring Project -- was released in April 1986 and carried out by Ted Fairchild, a nutrition professor at Brigham Young University, under the auspices of and with funding from the Utah Department of Health (Family Health Services Division). The goal of the project was to objectively describe the low income population in Utah and make some inferences about the nutrition and health status of the population. Also, the use of existing food and income assistance programs, the length of participation in these programs and reasons for not using the programs were investigated. Between June 20 and September 15, 1985, a questionnaire was administered to 1020 families across the state of Utah whose incomes were below 185% of the 1985 poverty guidelines. The sample roughly represents the geographic population distribution of the state. The sample was randomly selected from 1980 census data by census block areas. Also, heights and weights were measured in people's homes. Both indirect and direct measures point to food and health problems among low-income people in Utah.

There appears to be a great amount of pressure on families who have very limited resources. Thirty-six percent of the total households surveyed felt that their incomes were inadequate to meet their food needs, 49% could only live for a week or less on the food they had in their home at the time of the interview, and in 15 percent of the households, one or more people had not eaten at least one day in the past year because of lack of resources for food. (Three-fourths of these went without food for more than one day.) Forty-three percent of the households felt they could not afford their basic needs for health care; 36% could not afford adequate transportation; and 40% said that housing costs were more than they could afford. In spite of the fact that over 80 percent had one or more members in the work-force, 40% of the people felt they were not meeting their basic needs with their current income.

The most prevalent problem in growth among the children surveyed was short stature for age. Almost 1/3 of all the children surveyed were below the 5th percentile for height for age -- this is 6 times the level expected in a normal population. Also, one-fifth were below the 5th percentile for weight for age -- four times what one would expect. A high incidence of short stature is usually an indicator of long-term undernutrition.

The diets of the respondents showed little variety and extremely low consumption of fruits and vegetables. A large majority of the population were not receiving 100 or even 67 percent of the Recommended Dietary Allowances. Significant percentages of the group surveyed did not even consume one-third of their nutritional requirements for folic acid (45.57%), vitamin B_6 (29.15%), zinc (25.15%), vitamin B_{12} (17.05%), magnesium (15.9%), vitamin A (14.52%), vitamin C (15.15%), and calcium (12%).

In spite of insufficient funds for food and other basic needs, the majority of the low-income households surveyed did not participate in public assistance programs. Those in the lowest income quartile (presumably the most vulnerable) consistently list not knowing about the programs as a reason for never participating in them.

Of all the programs, the commodity foods distribution program was most used by the households surveyed. Almost 1/3 of the households were currently using the program. The average number of months in which people participated was 6.8. However, 54.5% had never participated. Of those who had not participated, the most common reason was that they did not know about the program (28.2%). About the same percentage (27.5%) responded that they felt they should not participate. Another one fifth (20.7%) felt they were not eligible. Only 10 percent felt they had no need of the program. The elderly were the most frequent users.

Sixty-seven percent of the sample had never used the Food Stamp Program, and only 18.6% were currently participating. People in the lowest income quartile were most likely to participate and had participated for the longest period of time. However, of those with the lowest income who did not participate, 15% did not know about the program, 37.6% felt they should not participate, and 21.5% thought they were not eligible. For the entire low-income sample, only 8% did not know about the program, but 40.5% felt they should not participate and 29% thought they were not eligible. Only nine percent responded that they did not need the Food Stamp Program as their reason for not participating.

Overall, the picture we get from this study is a group of low-income people who are having trouble meeting their basic needs and whose incomes are stretched and pulled in many directions. As a result, their diets are lacking in important nutrients and many of their children appear to be shorter than normal. The puzzle is that these people, obviously in great need of food, are not taking advantage of the programs that are available. Many do not know about the programs, many feel some stigma attached to participating in them, and many do not think they are eligible. Finally, the lowest income among them are the least likely to know about available food assistance.

Another recent study, being released today by the East Harlem Interfaith Welfare Committee, demonstrates some of the same problems, even though it is from a totally different world -- the streets of New York City -- but with a different twist. The food programs are known and people are trying to participate, but barriers and inadequate benefits stand in their way.

The study, carried out by Dr. Anna Lou Dehavenon, a social scientist working with skilled interviewers at 10 religious voluntary agencies in the poorest areas of Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx, surveyed 1,576 households with children who sought emergency food assistance from these agencies in 1985. (More than two-thirds of the people in food emergencies were children.)

Food emergencies, defined in this study as occurring when a household was determined to have run out of food, or to be in imminent danger of doing so, were long-term for these families. Sixty percent of the households reported being in food emergencies for up to seven days (as compared to 43% in 1984 and 37% in 1983.) 16 percent reported emergencies lasting 8 to 15 days and 24 percent, 16 or more days. 51 percent of the people seeking emergency food had eaten nothing since the day before and 21 percent had eaten nothing for two or more days. One-third of the households had eaten at a soup kitchen the previous week. Almost one-half reported having to beg for food or money.

Eighty-eight percent of the respondents were interacting with the public assistance system in some way, but they were still hungry. Their major reasons for being in food emergencies were (in order of predominance): having to use food money for rent because the shelter allowance was not enough; running out of food, money for food, and Food Stamps because public assistance and food stamp benefits were not enough; having to re-apply because their public assistance and/or food stamp case had been closed for an administrative reason or in error; and applying for public assistance and not having money or food stamps for food. Twenty-six percent of those already on public assistance were in food emergencies because their public assistance and/or food stamp cases had been closed for administrative reasons or in error.

The public sector does not appear to be meeting the needs of these vulnerable families. Only 35 percent of the households reported going to the Income Maintenance Center for help before coming to an emergency food program (compared to 44% in 1984 and 1983, and 56% in 1982). None of them received immediate relief at the Income Maintenance Centers, but were referred to the emergency food programs instead. Income Maintenance Center workers told only 37 percent of them about expedited food stamps. Twenty-three percent of the new applicants had to wait more than 28 days in food emergencies to learn whether or not they were accepted on the Food Stamp Program.

The overall "snapshot" we get of these people seeking emergency food in New York City is one of families with children who have had a food emergency for an extended period of time.

They have run out of money, been closed out of public assistance and/or food stamps for administrative reasons or in error, or they have applied for assistance and not yet received it. It appears that the "system" is not effective in getting food stamps or money for food to these families soon enough and in sufficient quantity.

Low Participation Part of National Trend

Not only are administrative barriers making it more difficult for people who need assistance to receive help, it is more difficult for public assistance workers to help the people they know need help. The emphasis in government assistance programs is increasingly on shuffling paper than on helping people.

A state food stamp official with fourteen years experience in one Southern state recently told a member of our staff some of her experiences in food stamp administration. She said:

> It started out being a very simple procedure, and now its so utterly cumbersome and complex . . . They have made it such a mess of paperwork, they've made it harder and harder to do our jobs. Since 1980, I would venture to say our paperwork has tripled . . . We spend all our time doing paperwork, not interviewing clients. There are plenty of people who need food stamps and we get to a lot of them, but it's getting harder and harder. The system is concentrating on processing paper, not helping people.

That worker also admitted the state fails to meet the 30 day standard for processing food stamp applications.

A recent report by the Missouri Association for Social Welfare noted the views of one county welfare director who said, "We are not intentionally inhumane, but we have so much work that we rush people through like cattle and don't talk to them. I'm sure that it feels humiliating to those who apply."

The effect of administrative practices on the accessibility of the Food Stamp Program to those in need is a serious concern. Last year the Urban Institute reported -- in a study mandated by Congress and commissioned by USDA -- that by 1983, food stamp participation was 600,000 persons lower than could be explained by all economic, demographic and policy variables. Today, food stamp participation remains low by historic standards, especially considering the relatively high rates of unemployment and poverty that persist.

Poverty

Hunger is a condition of poverty. In 1984, 33.7 million Americans lived in poverty. Since 1979, the number of Americans living in poverty has increased by 7.6 million. The poverty rate of 14.4 percent in 1984 represents the highest poverty rate since since 1966, except for the recession years of 1982 and 1983. The poverty rate is now the highest for any non-recession year in nearly two decades.

Children make up a disturbingly large portion of the poverty population. One in every four children under the age of 6 lives below the poverty line. One in every two black children under age 6 is poor and two in every five Hispanic children under age 6 live in poverty. The gap between the poverty rate for children and the poverty rate for the overall population is at its widest point since the Census Bureau began collecting poverty data in 1959. In fact, the poverty rate for children is now nearly double the poverty rate for adults.

Part of the child poverty problem is associated with the high proportion of poverty among female-headed households. Persons living in families headed by a single woman are more than three times as likely to be poor as families headed by a married couple or a single man. Thirty-four percent of all persons living in female-headed families are poor, compared to 9.3 percent of persons in other families.

Unemployment and the Working Poor

In April 1986, 15.3 million Americans were either out of work, under-employed or had given up looking for work. The number of unemployed or underemployed persons bears a close relationship to the hunger and poverty problems.

As the poverty rate has increased, so has the number of working poor. The number of working persons in prime working age (those people aged 22 to 64) in poverty has increased by more than 60 percent since 1978. Of all poor people who head families, nearly half (49.2%) worked at some point during the year.

Part of the growth in the number of working poor has occurred because more people have had to settle for working part-time because full-time work is unavailable. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' monthly employment data for April, 5.9 million Americans were employed part-time due to economic reasons. In March, the figure was 5.5 million.

Compounding the unemployment and underemployment problem is the growing gap between the minimum wage and the poverty level. The minimum wage has not been adjusted since 1981. Since then, consumer prices have increased by nearly 25 percent and the poverty level for a family of four has risen by almost $2,000. In 1978, a family of four, with one person working full-time earning the minimum wage fell $1,150 below the poverty line of $6,662. In 1986, such a family falls $5,300 below the projected poverty line of $11,000.

While unemployment and underemployment have become persistent problems, the protection for workers who lose their jobs is less than it used to be. In April 1986, 65 percent of unemployed workers received no unemployment insurance according to the Labor Department.

Other Factors Affecting Hunger

In addition to the Food Stamp Program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children serves as the basic source of income maintence for low income Americans. Between 1970 and 1986, the average benefit paid under the AFDC program decreased by 33 percent in real terms according to the House Ways and Means Committee.

Budget cutbacks in a variety of low income programs have contributed to the current budget problem. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, programs targeted to low income families and individuals comprise about one-tenth of the federal budget, yet these programs bore nearly one-third of the budget cuts enacted in 1981 - 1983.

According to a 1983 Congressional Budget Office report, legislation enacted in 1981 and 1982 resulted in the following percentage cuts in low income programs:

Program	Percentage Cut
Food Stamps	13%
Child Nutrition	28%
AFDC	13%
Low Income Energy Assistance	8%
Medicaid	5%
Social Services Block Grant	22%
Housing Assistance	4%

The increasing problem of homelessness not only adds to the hunger problem but it makes it much tougher to address. While no one is sure how many Americans are homeless, we know the problem is increasing. A large portion of the increase is reported to be among families with children. The sudden loss of a job can turn an employed person with a home or apartment into a homeless person. In a Department of Housing and Urban Development survey of homeless shelters, 35 percent of the homeless were jobless for less than nine months.

In addition, the availability of low rent housing has shrunk dramatically in recent years. The National Low Income Housing Coalition reports that over 8 million low income renter households need housing with rents at or below $184 per month to maintain a 30 percent rent-to-income ratio. Yet, in 1985, only 4.2 million units rented at or below this level. The Coalition also reported that since 1980, the shortage of affordable housing has increased by over 2.15 million units, or 120 percent.

With homelessness come increased nutrition problems. The lack of kitchen facilities and the resources to purchase meals can lead to nutritional deficiencies among the homeless.

While meals provided to the homeless in some shelters and hotels provide help,it is doubtful that homeless people receive the recommended dietary allowance of necessary nutrients. The nutritional problems of the homeless are more acute among high-risk segments of the population, particularly the young, women of child-bearing age and the elderly. Recent hearings by the House Select Committee on Hunger have documented children in homeless shelters do not receive adequate nutrition.

A Strategy towards ending hunger

Ending hunger in America will be no easy or short task. It will require a partnership of individuals, business, the federal government, church and civic leaders and state and local governments. It will require more than an increase in food stamp benefits or increases in child nutrition programs. While ending hunger may be our long term goal, alleviating the problem for millions of Americans can happen quickly if we have the will to make it happen.

First, the Food Research and Action Center supports the efforts of Senator Edward Kennedy and Representative Leon Panetta in their newly released plan to alleviate hunger through federal food and nutrition programs. This legislation would bring food stamp benefits more in line with actual food costs, make qualifying for benefits easier and quicker for those in need, target assistance to many low income children and elderly, increase nutrition education, promote long term community involvement through the Community Food and Nutrition Program, increase administrative funding for the distribution of surplus commodities and provide us with more reliable information on nutritional status and the health effects of hunger through a national nutrition monitoring system.

Second, we need to continue community and local efforts to provide emergency food but we must also recongnize their limitations. A recent working paper put together by the President's Domestic Policy Council working group on welfare reform stated that one of its principles was the following:

> Everyone in our society should have access to the means to meet their basic living requirements, first through his own efforts, then through family, neighborhood, and community support, and finally through public assistance when other resources are insufficient.

While no one would disagree that the individual must help himself first, utilizing public assistance as a last resort is inappropriate and inefficient. We must remember that private and local efforts are designed to handle emergency or short-term food needs. They are not designed or equipped to serve as the basis for regularized, ongoing assistance. A case in point is the Shepherd's Table, a soup kitchen in Silver Spring, Maryland with which FRAC has a close working relationship. We believe Shepherd's Table is like many of the other soup kitchens and food pantries all around the country.

In addition to serving about 100 meals a night, seven nights a week, Shepherd's Table has had to overcome many obstacles to continue its good work. Just recently, the Shepherd's Table increased its paid staff from two to four people. Over 400 volunteers a month (10-15 a night) are utilized to serve and prepare meals and they must be coordinated. Food must be ordered and stored, sanitation codes must be obeyed, funding must be raised (primarily from the private sector) to pay staff and utilities, and a host of logistical and security needs must be met.

In the past six months alone, the board of directors has had to deal with:

- -- Burnout by board members spending 20 hours a week or more of their own time keeping the soup kitchen going;
- -- Demands by neighbors that the soup kitchen be moved;
- -- Pressure from police to close down the soup kitchen because of their fear that it would become a magnet for troublemakers;
- -- The possibility that the church which donated the facility wanted to reclaim it for other uses; and,
- -- Such growth in the numbers of persons seeking aid that the facility may soon prove to be physically inadequate.

Shepherd's Table and emergency food providers like it, are truly stretched to the limit. There is a need for federal, state, and local government programs to take some of the load off the Shepherd's Table so that it can serve those people who uniquely need its services. The Shepherd's Table is just one example of a larger national problem. Too many people who could be helped more efficiently and effectively by regularized government assistance are falling through the cracks. That's where you can help.

Third, state and local governments can provide added help. While hunger is a national problem requiring national solutions, state and local governments can help. Many states have not increased their level of payments to AFDC in many years. Further, many states are looking at ways to target help in very high risk areas.

Fourth, this committee on Labor and Human Resources can play a significant role in reducing hunger by stimulating increased employment opportunity for low income Americans. We must stop the growth in the number of working poor. In recent years, there has been a trend toward operating more employment programs through welfare departments. While this helps target employment programs on public assistance participants, it raises new difficulties. We must be careful to avoid too large a shift from employment and training programs to work requirements as part of federal assistance programs.

Work and training programs should be designed to find meaningful employment for people who would otherwise have difficulty finding work. Establishing programs that increase bureaucracy and do little more than monitor the compliance of participants with perfunctory requirements will do little to reduce the number of people in need of government assistance.

A new study by the Manpower Development Research Corporation suggests that a variety of employment and training approaches can achieve modest gains in increasing the employment of certain public assistance participants. The MDRC study also found that the work ethic is very much alive among low income persons and that the various employment and training models tested had the greatest positive impact on hard-to-employ groups.

What this study suggests is that we should focus more on work opportunities than requirements and that we should target employment assistance on the hard to employ, rather than those who will find jobs anyway. If there are those who refuse to work after appropriate employment, training and education opportunities have been offered, then compliance measures could be applied. Why waste time enforcing requirements on everyone when all of the studies indicate that the vast majority of the poor able to work are anxious to do so? The "E.T." (Employment and Training) Program in Massachusetts is a case in point. This voluntary program has an extensive waiting list of welfare recipients anxious to participate. It is this Committee that has the jurisdiction and expertise to expand this type of work and training opportunity more effectively than any other Senate Committee.

Fifth, we need to change the tax code to reduce the tax burden on the working poor. Both the House and Senate tax reform measures would move us in that direction. There has been a tremendous increase in tax burden, primarily due to payroll taxes, for working poor households in the past few years.

Sixth, we must also ensure full services for those people who through no fault of their own can not work. As the

Kennedy-Panetta bill recognizes, elderly and disabled individuals have special needs which can be met. Particularly for the frail elderly and the severely disabled, programs like "meals on wheels" are indispensible. For these people, these meals can be the sole means of survival.

Conclusion

Alleviating hunger in the short term and ending the long term factors that contribute to hunger makes sound public policy. It is an investment in all people that will give us lasting benefits for generations to come. Failure to take action not only is morally unjustifiable in a country of our wealth but it is shortsighted as well.

As William S. Woodside, Chief Executive of American Can Company, has stated:

> "Today hunger is a social and public health problem, and government must do its share. Otherwise, hunger will exact terrible penalties in higher health costs, a higher death rate and millions of poorly nourished youngsters growing into poorly functioning adults."

Question from Senator Orrin G. Hatch:

Is malnutrition in this country caused by lack of access to food sources or is it caused by poor food choices?

Answer from Lynn Parker, Senior Nutritionist, Food Research and Action Center:

Malnutrition in this country is sometimes caused by poor food choices but its primary cause is lack of access to food sources, including the widespread problem of insufficient income to purchase food among low-income people.

The relationship seems obvious enough -- if you are poor you will have greater difficulty meeting any of your needs which require the use of money. One of these needs is food. If you are poor, you are less likely to be able to purchase enough food to be well-nourished than you would if you had more money. You are also less likely to be able to avoid hunger. However, beyond the common sense relationship between lack of sufficient funds and lack of sufficient foods, there is factual evidence which shows that lower income is linked to less adequate nutrition.

A look at the way the poverty level was devised is a first step in understanding the link between poverty and hunger and malnutrition. In 1965, the poverty level was developed by combining a 1955 USDA study showing that the average family spent one-third of its income on food and a 1961 USDA showing how little families could spend on food and meet federally set nutrition standards. What resulted was the multiplication of this minimum food budget times three. This "poverty level" has been adjusted every year based on the Consumer Price Index. The food budget used in the 1965 calculation reflects a diet at the borderline of adequacy -- once described by the USDA itself as, "designed for short-term use when funds are extremely low." Many people with food budgets at this level would obviously have trouble getting enough food, and those below the poverty level would surely have trouble by the very definition of the poverty level.

This has particular relevance to the increasing number of people who are poor in the United States, and thus at risk of malnutrition. In 1984, 33.7 million Americans lived in poverty. Since 1979, the number of Americans living in poverty has increased by 7.6 million. The poverty rate of 14.4 percent in 1984 represents the highest poverty rate since 1966, except for the recession years of 1982 and 1983. The poverty rate is now the highest for any non-recession year in nearly two decades. Moreover, the poor are poorer -- the proportion of the poor who fall below 50 percent of the poverty line has been increasing in recent years -- from less than 30 percent in 1975, to one third in 1980, and to 37.9 percent in 1984.

Also, children make up a disturbingly large portion of the poverty population. One in every four children under the age of 6 lives below the poverty line.

According to data from government surveys, there is a relationship between income and nutritional intake. For example, USDA's 1977-78 Nationwide Food Consumption Survey shows that the percentage of households that met or exceeded the Recommended Dietary Allowances increased as income increased, and decreased as income decreased. The Preschool Nutrition Survey (1968-70) showed that low income preschoolers were of smaller physical size and had lower hemoglobin levels than higher income children. The Ten-State Nutrition Survey (1968-70) also showed that low income children were more frequently of smaller physical size. The Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (1971-1974) showed a relationship between family income and the intake of calories, protein and calcium -- the lower the income, the less adequate the intake of these nutrients.

In addition, according to USDA's 1977-78 Nationwide Food Consumption Survey, only 12% of low-income households spending at the Thrifty Food Plan level (the amount allotted to food stamp households) obtained 100% of their Recommended Dietary Allowances and only 34% obtained 80% of these nutrition standards. Yet, the data from the same survey shows that the "food shopping expertise of households with low food costs, with low income, and receiving food stamps was as good or better than that of other households". It seems clear that poor families have difficulty nourishing themselves, despite their generally good food shopping habits. This points to lack of access to food sources as the cause of poor nutrition rather than poor food choices.

In the state of Utah, the 1985 Nutrition Monitoring Project (carried out by Ted Fairchild, a nutrition professor at Brigham Young University, under the auspices of and with funding from the Utah Department of Health's Family Services Division) found that thirty-six percent of the total households surveyed (living on less than 185% of the poverty level) felt that their incomes were inadequate to meet their food needs, 49% could only live for a week or less on the food they had in their home at the time of the interview, and in 15 percent of the households, one or more people had not eaten at least one day in the past year because of lack of resources for food. (Three-fourths of these went without food for more than one day.) Forty-three percent of the households felt they could not afford their basic needs for health care; 36% could not afford adequate transportation; and 40 % said that housing costs were more than they could afford. In spite of the fact that over 80 percent had one or more members in the workforce, 40% of the people felt they were not meeting their basic needs with their current income.

Along with the increase in poverty, other factors have stood in the way of poor people's access to food resources. In addition to the Food Stamp Program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children serves as the basic source of income maintenance for low income Americans. Between 1970 and 1986, the average benefit paid under the AFDC program decreased by 33 percent in real terms according to the House Ways and Means Committee.

Budget cutbacks in a variety of low income programs have contributed to poor people's difficulty in obtaining a nutritionally adequate diet. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, programs targeted to low income families and individuals comprise about one-tenth of the federal budget, yet these programs bore nearly one-third of the budget cuts enacted in 1981 - 1983.

According to a 1983 Congressional Budget Office report, legislation enacted in 1981 and 1982 resulted in the following percentage cuts in low income programs:

Program	Percentage Cut
Food Stamps	13%
Child Nutrition	28%
AFDC	13%
Low Income Energy Assistance	8%
Medicaid	5%
Social Services Block Grant	22%
Housing Assistance	4%

The increasing problem of homelessness not only adds to the hunger problem but makes it much tougher to address. While no one is sure how many Americans are homeless, we know the problem is increasing. A large portion of the increase is reported to be among families with children. The sudden loss of a job can turn an employed person with a home or apartment into a homeless person. In a Department of Housing and Urban Development survey of homeless shelters, 35 percent of the homeless were jobless for less than nine months.

In addition, the availability of low rent housing has shrunk dramatically in recent years. The National Low Income Housing Coalition reports that over 8 million low income renter households need housing with rents at or below $184 per month to maintain a 30 percent rent-to-income ratio. Yet, in 1985, only 4.2 million units rented at or below this level. The Coalition also reported that since 1980, the shortage of affordable housing has increased by over 2.15 million units, or 120 percent.

With homelessness come increased nutrition problems. The lack of kitchen facilities and the resources to purchase meals can lead to nutritional deficiencies among the homeless. While meals provided to the homeless in some shelters and hotels provide help, it is doubtful that homeless people receive the recommended dietary allowance of necessary nutrients. The nutritional problems of the homeless are more acute among high-risk segments of the population, particularly the young, women of child-bearing age and the elderly. Recent hearings by the House Select Committee on Hunger have documented that children in homeless shelters do not receive adequate nutrition.

Another increasing problem is administrative barriers which make it more difficult for people who need assistance to receive help. A state food stamp official with fourteen years experience in one Southern state recently told a member of our staff some of her experiences in food stamp administration. She said:

> It started out being a very simple procedure, and now it's so utterly cumbersome and complex...They have made it such a mess of paperwork, they've made it harder and harder to do our jobs. Since 1980, I would venture to say our paperwork has tripled...We spend all our time doing paperwork, not interviewing clients. There are plenty of people who need food stamps and we get to a lot of them, but it's getting harder and harder. The system is concentrating on processing paper, not helping people.

That worker also admitted the state fails to meet the 30 day standard for processing food stamp applications.

A recent report by the Missouri Association for Social Welfare noted the views of one county welfare director who said, "We are not intentionally inhumane, but we have so much work that we rush people through like cattle and don't talk to them. I'm sure that it feels humiliating to those who apply."

The effect of administrative practices on the accessibility of the Food Stamp Program, and thus, access to food resources to those in need, is a serious concern. Last year the Urban Institute reported -- in a study mandated by Congress and commissioned by USDA -- that by 1983, food stamp participation was 600,000 persons lower than could be explained by all economic, demographic and policy variables. Today, food stamp participation remains low by historic standards, especially considering the relatively high rates of unemployment and poverty that persist.

None of the situations mentioned above have anything to do with poor food choices. Rather, they have everything to do with the increase in problems which lead to the lack of sufficient income to purchase an adequate diet.

The choice should not be between nutrition education or federal food and income assistance. Nutritional food choices is a society-wide issue, a problem that is not limited to poor people. Ironically, however, the two federal nutrition education programs have been level-funded for years - - the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program at $60 million (for low-income homemakers) and the Nutrition Education and Training Program at $5 million (for children in schools and day care centers). The Administration recommended in its 1987 budget the elimination of funding for these two programs.

Anyone close to the issue of hunger will tell you that lack of sufficient income is related to malnutrition. The increase in hunger in this country is not because poor people have suddenly forgotten what they should know about food shopping. Rather, it is because there are more poor people struggling to make ends meet with less help from the federal government. If poor people had more money, they would be better off nutritionally as a group. A higher income does not ensure nutritional adequacy for every individual, but it certainly increases the chances that the majority will be better nourished and will not be hungry.

Question from Senator Charles E. Grassley:

Ms. Kondratas has criticized on methodological grounds several of the major recent studies which have asserted that there is widespread and, especially, increasing hunger in the United States. How do you respond to her criticism? Would you agree that it is important to be able to support conclusions in this area, especially those on which policy recommendations are based, by the best methodology and data available?

Answer from Lynn Parker, Senior Nutritionist, Food Research and Action Center:

It is very important to be able to support conclusions on the issue of hunger in the United States by the best methodology and data available. However, the only entity in our country today that has sufficient resources to meet the extremely high standards that Ms. Kondratas has set for a comprehensive national survey providing incontrovertible evidence is the federal government itself.

Ms. Kondratas states in her testimony that"...the federal government should give serious consideration to developing annual health and nutrition surveys to produce reliable and current estimates of the nutritional status of all Americans as well as the poor." We agree, and that is why we and over seventy national organizations (representing food producers, consumers, members of religious organizations, senior citizens, health and nutrition professionals, scientists, education officials and advocates for children and low income people, public officials and minorities) support H.R. 2436 and S. 1569, both bills which create the kind of comprehensive, coordinated and more timely national nutrition surveillance system Ms. Kondratas suggests.

Her recommendation is not new. Congress has been requesting this kind of system from the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services since 1977, and such a system was envisioned and recommended at the 1969 White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health. In its January 1984 report, the President's Task Force on Food Assistance pointed to the "lack of up-to-date data [that] has made it impossible to assess whether the current nutritional status of the population has worsened over the last few years..." All of their recommendations for improving the collection of nutrition information could be implemented under these two bills. Finally, numerous government agencies, researchers and scientific societies have recommended a more comprehensive and coordinated nutrition monitoring program in the United States. However, in spite of all of this compelling support for a better system, the Administration has consistently opposed the passage of nutrition monitoring legislation. Numerous changes have been made in H.R. 2436 to accomodate concerns raised by the Administration, but although bipartisan support is building in the House, the Administration continues its opposition to the bill.

In the meantime, many organizations, government officials and individuals have attempted to document the existence and extent of a problem they see increasing in their communities, states, and regions -- hunger. Their studies and surveys go far beyond the casual anecdote, subjective impression or isolated case that Ms. Kondratas implies. University professors, physicians, and health departments have attempted to carry out surveys and studies on a sound academic and methodological basis. The studies show increases in the numbers of people seeking emergency assistance; children who are not growing at normal rates; and individuals who come to food pantries after not eating for several days. These surveys are numerous and come from communities and states nationwide. They are done by community groups, churches, private voluntary agencies, public health departments, health professionals, hospitals and academics. In fact, anyone who is close to the issue of hunger at the local level will tell you that there is definitely a problem and that it increases daily.

Dr. Irwin Rosenberg, professor of medicine at the University of Chicago Medical Center and a former member of the National Academy of Sciences Food and Nutrition Board stated the dilemma well in a hearing before the Senate Budget Committee:

> If our information from various states and private food assistance programs and maternal and child centers indicates that there is hunger but we are not sure f its extent, can we afford the luxury of waiting until our statistics are fully adequate before making sure that there are effective programs in place to provide food assistance to those who need it? We could ask where the burden of proof lies, with those who cite evidence of an increasing hunger problem and suggest action or with those who find the evidence inconclusive. I would argue that we can no more afford to withhold programs until there is ironclad evidence of malnutrition and disease (which would be both inhumane and far more costly in the long run) than we can afford to wait until there is documented disease and disability from potentially harmful agents in the environment before we take action against their use. For that matter, we would not be willing to wait to build our defense systems only after direct evidence of clear and present danger to our security. So if there is enough evidence that there is a hunger problem of some magnitude and there is evidence that food assistance programs have lessened the impact of the problem, and the contrasts between the 1968 and 1978 USDA surveys, especially the narrowed gap between the higher and lower economic groups, are persuasive to me in that regard, then I think we must act to make sure that our food assistance programs are strong and responsive.
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> This becomes a matter not of the adequacy of the data but of the attitude toward what is acceptable and tolerable and what is perceived as the appropriate role of the Federal government. The burden of proof must lie at least as much with those who say we can afford to weaken our support programs as with those who argue that we need to act vigorously to prevent malnutrition and disease.

The trends in all the surveys and studies done so far are clear -- the problems of hunger and malnutrition in this country appear to be growing. It is not surprising that this problem has increased in recent years. As we pointed out in our testimony, poverty has increased substantially. According to data from government nutrition surveys, there is a relationship between income and nutritional intake -- the lower the income, the less adequate the diet. Yet, data from USDA's Nationwide Food Consumption Survey shows that "food shopping expertise of households with low food costs, with low income, and receiving food stamps was as good or better than that of other households." The problem is not poor food choices; it is lack of income.

Moreover, the poverty level is based on a 1961 USDA study showing how little families could spend on food and meet federally set nutrition standards. This food budget reflects a diet, as described by USDA itself, that is "designed for short-term use when funds are extremely low." Thus, many people below the poverty level surely have trouble getting enough food.

Along with the increase in poverty, we also pointed out how cuts in programs providing food and income assistance to poor families have decreased the amount of money available to purchase food and other necessities. These programs bore nearly one-third of the budget cuts enacted in 1981-1983. Also, the increasing problem of homelessness adds to the hunger problem, as well as recently implemented administrative barriers which make it more difficult for people who need food assistance to receive it.

It is relatively easy to point out methodological problems in any study, especially one that attempts to document the existence and extent of hunger. However, we would argue that these studies are honest attempts at using the best methodology available and obtaining the best data possible on a problem that is staring many communities in the face. Frankly, many community leaders find it difficult to believe that anyone could deny problems they see increasing on a daily basis.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. I have many other questions but I am going to submit them to you in writing. I think every Senator would like to do what is right here and effective to address the problem of hunger in the United States. But there are tremendous differences in the opinion about what is right. Your input and responses to other questions will be very helpful to us so I am going to keep the record open not only for myself to submit questions but for other members of this committee. I will ask that questions get to them by the end of this week so as not to burden you too much. Your answers to these questions will be of great help to us. Your testimonies have been very helpful to the committee.

And we appreciate you. With that, we will recess until further notice.

Thank you.

[Whereupon, the hearing was recessed until further notice, at 12:15 p.m.]

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